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J.D. Bergson's 'Morning', which is on show in the Salon des Refusés at the Albemarle Gallery, 48 Albemarle Street, London W1, until March 13

Beasts like us

Stephen R. L. Clark

VICKI HEARNE
Adam's Task: Calling animals by name
288pp. Heinemann. £10.95.

JAMES SERPELL
In the Company of Animals
234pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £14.95.
0631 145362

In C.S. Lewis's prophetic novel, *That Hideous Strength*, the resident sceptic, MacPhee, raises what he sees as a difficulty for Ransom's household: "The bear is kept in the house and pampered. The pigs are kept in a sty and killed for bacon. I would be interested to know the philosophical rationale of the distinction." The voice of uneducated good sense (or what Lewis seems to have taken to be good sense), in the person of Ivy Maggs, responds: "I think it's just silly. Who ever heard of trying to make bacon out of a bear?" The philosopher is hardly satisfied. Why is it, and how is it, that we manage to take such different attitudes to animals? Why do we pamper pets, but leave creatures just as sensitive to the tender mercies of factory-farmers, experimentalists or hunters? What stories do we tell ourselves about them, and about what we do or have a right to do to them? Both Vicki Hearne and James Serpell attempt an answer: Serpell takes a wider view of the subject, and Hearne a more exact and illuminating examination of one area that Serpell hardly mentions, the training of animals such as dogs or horses to splendid fulfilments of their natural capacities (to trail, to hunt, to leap).

Some fifteen years ago it became allowable once more for moral philosophers to contemplate real moral issues, and raise genuinely radical questions about the usual answers. Should we not treat creatures differently only if they are relevantly different? What relevance could a capacity to talk a human language have

to the question of how a creature should be treated? As Bentham had observed, the question was not "could animals talk?", but "could they suffer?". Not all of us believed that positive suffering was all that mattered: a human being is injured not merely if she is caused to suffer, but if she is not allowed to live a worthwhile life according to her nature. The same, it seemed, must also be true of beasts. The imprisoned veal-calf might not be "in pain", but was hardly living a life that anyone could reckon good: was not that an injury? Did not the laws of the land already admit that the interests of animals could be pursued through the courts, and offenders punished, and was that not as much as to admit that animals "had rights", that the officers of the State had a right to enforce certain standards of treatment in the interest of animals?

Most of those philosophers who wrote under the banner of "animal liberation" wished that like cases should be treated alike, that dogs (or bears) should have no greater rights than pigs merely because we told a different story about them, saw different symbolic values embodied in them. Most of us were so alarmed by the patent corruption of the human-animal relationship that we wished to distance ourselves even from loving pet-owners, horsemen and honest naturalists: these latter might be very anxious for the welfare, the lives well-lived, of "their" animals, but they did not seriously think that animals should have just the same sort of consideration as human tribes or human children, even if no clear difference of a morally relevant kind could be pointed out. The liberationists wanted justice for all, not simply a decrease in positive suffering and not simply a better awareness in the human populace of what animals can achieve when decently treated, and trained. At the same time, it was obvious that there were special historical influences at work that could not be unthought or wished away: we do have a special relationship with dogs, horses, cats that we do not have with wolves, wildebeest and chimps. We have, as

Hearne would say, more stories about them and us; and they have been bred and trained in ways that allow them to take up a "responsible" place in human society. Even a signing chimpanzee cannot be trusted not to bite her trainer once she is adult (and why should she not?), crazy dogs who can't be trusted are just that - crazy or incomprehending. In so far as they have learnt to understand, even though not to speak, a human tongue, they are members of normal civil society, a society that can indeed break down or be corrupted, but which allows us - humans, dogs and horses - the luxury of taking peaceable relations more or less for granted. Trust, as Locke said, is the bond of society.

Vicki Hearne teaches English literature at Yale, and is a professional horse and dog trainer. *Adam's Task* is her attempt to explain to her academic colleagues the language and form of life familiar to her as a trainer. In American academic circles - far more so than in Britain - it is the greatest of sins to be "anthropomorphic": "animals" should be viewed as controllable mechanisms, not as beings with whom we might have "moral" relationships. If an experimenter inadvertently describes his subject as "angry", "jealous" or "apprehensive", scare quotes must be emphasized, and such "loose", or "ordinary language" description eventually replaced by "scientific" jargon. If we cannot "prove" that animals are more than mechanisms, we are somehow required, without any proof, to assume that they are not. Professional trainers, on the other hand, simply cannot get by without the working assumption that the animals they deal with have individual points of view, characters and plans. Hearne makes clear how badly the charge of "anthropomorphism" misfires. Her dogs and cats and horses behave and feel like dogs and cats and horses, and she succeeds in training them away from (self-)destructive habits precisely because she can grasp their difference, their pride in being what they can, with her help, become. The real moral of

the tale of Clever Hans, the horse who seemed to be able to solve simple arithmetical puzzles until it was realized that he was being cued, unconsciously, by his interrogator, is not "How stupid horses are if they can't tell that 7 + 5 = 12!" but rather "How very interesting that horses can understand human beings so well!"

Much of Hearne's book is directed at a rather different target, people she calls "humanists", who disapprove of rigorous training methods or repressive commands. Imagining that what their animals need is sentimental affection, pity or a wild permissiveness, they allow destructive behaviour, sloppy or indolent technique, until the day when they at last require Hearne, or some other front-liner, to re-educate their murderous pet. Good working dogs and horses have a beauty and nobility of life and character that is insulted, outraged by the sort of contemptuous pity which thinks it cruel to impose discipline upon a youngster's moods, cruel to demand of horse or dog the very best they can deliver. Such human failure produces monsters, animals as confused as the schizoid products of a pathogenic household. And just as autistic or schizophrenic humans can, perhaps, be humanized by having to work with animals to create an accomplished performance, so can the animals themselves be restored to sanity. Sane dogs or horses inhabit much the same moral universe as we do, accept responsibility for what they do and seek to embody a natural perfection. Pity for the champion racehorse who has been "made" to run her best is as inappropriate as terror of the properly educated guard-dog, as if the latter were a "killing machine" or psychopath.

Hearne's stories, whether they are about her animals, or about the weird attitudes of those colleagues who express their "kindness to animals" by wishing her dogs dead, are always illuminating. Illuminating not only about animals - though it is impossible not to admire the fiercely unsentimental approach she makes to them - but about our own moral life, a life

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Anthony Kenny

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This is a fine book, small but remarkably rich in its combination of historical erudition, overview of recent discussion, and valuable original argument. It deserves close attention from all who care about the philosophy of God. *Philosophical Review*
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Viciously persuadable

Don Locke

MARK PHILIP
Godwin's Political Justice
278pp. Duckworth. £28.
071562010X

the gains morality itself brings – the gains of eliminating a Hobbesian state of nature? Here Gauthier has a number of arguments, but these arguments strike me as especially strained. "Unproductive transfers", he writes, "parade in spurious moral and ideological trappings. If we are no longer taken in by the blandishments of nobility, we are all too ready to succumb to the claims of inequality." The arguments for heeding a Lockean but orderly state of nature form the crux of establishing Gauthier's egalitarian vision, and I can only glance at one.

The threat of Hobbes's state of nature is a threat of violence and predation. A person should not be expected to keep agreements that stem from threats, because the expectation will elicit those threats. So runs the chief argument, but it seems not to the point. Without morality we would have Hobbes's state of nature, even if no one were issuing threats with an eye to later bargaining. Bargainers do well to convince others that they will not be moved by threats, but they cannot ignore what would happen if bargaining failed – or if they can, it is hard to understand what a theory of bargaining like Gauthier's is supposed to be doing.

Gauthier claims to derive a particular vision of morality from the bare demands of reason. Even if this claim fails, as I think it does, he conveys the vision itself and gives it content. He sees a world in which no one is a net burden on others, no matter what his needs. In this world, trade is free unless everyone does better with constraint, and the gains of constraint are fairly divided. It is hard to give real shape to the parts of this vision, but Gauthier is ingenious in delineating them, and he devotes a chapter to his theory's implications for such things as economic rent and intergenerational justice. The book ends with a fascinating discussion of why human rational co-operators might develop feelings for each other and for morality itself. This goes to mitigate the system's callousness, though perhaps not completely.

Morality is supposed to be impartial, and Gauthier insists that morality as he portrays it satisfies this requirement. Now impartiality is a puzzling notion; the law, we are told, impartially forbids both rich and poor to sleep under bridges. We get no real explanation of what impartiality is, and on this there is little sign that Gauthier sees why readers might be baffled. He does think there are circumstances in which reason and impartiality diverge, and even those unconvinced by the main argument should find this discussion fascinating.

As for rescuing drowning strangers, reciprocity might call even for that, through a scheme of insurance. Perhaps we should throw the stranger a line because he and others would do the same for us. In a rational social contract, we would insure ourselves against emergencies by mutual promises of aid: insurance can substitute for mutual concern, as Gauthier mentions. Once it does, though, it is not clear how much substance is left to Gauthier's ringing denunciations of redistribution. Given a chance early enough to insure against inability to earn, we would rationally do so.

Gauthier runs another argument parallel to his main one, asking what moral system it would be rational to choose if one were ignorant of one's capacities and preferences. Here the argument is especially baffling. One must choose, he says, as if one were each of the persons affected by the choice. The rational thing to choose, then, is a freedom to advance one's own interests as one sees fit, in so far as others remain free to interact with one or not. Thus one chooses not to be helped if one cannot pay. But it is hard to see why this follows. As Kant puts the point, "a will that settled on this would clash with itself, since many situations can still arise for him in which he needs the love and interest of others, and in which, through such a law of nature... he would rob himself of all hope of the help he wants for himself." Again we need insurance.

A reader can only admire the grand structure Gauthier builds, and admire how well he identifies the central points that need to be proved. Throughout the book are strewn good arguments and fascinating observations. The style is not always engaging, but it is reasonably clear and at times eloquent. Central aspects of morality may well rest on mutuality, and it is important to establish how they might. Gauthier's book helps with this in many ways, even if it fails in its most far-reaching claims.

Not the least of the puzzles about William Godwin is why, until recently, he should have been so relatively neglected. He is in many respects an ideal topic for intellectual history and biography: a man of unusual and extreme opinions who captured the spirit of his age at a time of major historical importance; whose views altered interestingly in the face of changing personal and political circumstances; who left behind a quantity of intricate primary source material; and whose writings and biography pose any number of problems around which the aspiring author can build a thesis. Mark Philip's careful and detailed study, not just of *Political Justice* but of Godwin's thought through the 1790s, takes advantage of all of this. As a work of analysis, as opposed to biography, it is the best account of Godwin we have had to date.

Philip selects three central puzzles to provide his framework: how could any rational person seriously believe what Godwin believed, in particular the eventual disappearance of political government? How could anyone proposing such a view achieve so meteoric a rise, and subsequent fall, in public acclaim? And, having formulated such a view and having been so acclaimed for it, how could Godwin himself come to change his mind? The answer to all three puzzles, Philip suggests, lies in what he calls, slightly obsessively, the "social milieu": the intellectual community within which Godwin moved provided him with a model for the society of rational disputants which he saw replacing coercive authority; it was this same community which welcomed *Political Justice* with so much enthusiasm; and it was its collapse which both undermined Godwin's faith in its political potentiality, and which explains his own fall from fame and favour.

In discussing Godwin's social milieu Philip is naturally led into questions of political and historical context. But he is markedly reluctant to consider personal character and influences. In particular, he takes little account of Godwin's passionately rational temperament, though it was a topic of obsessive interest to Godwin himself. So when Philip finds it "hard to believe that a rational man could reach the conclusions which Godwin appears to reach in *Political Justice*", he offers as explanation "that if Godwin was irrational he was far from alone". Yet even close acquaintances found many of Godwin's opinions absurd: the conclusion that mind will eventually become omnipotent over matter to the extent that we can avoid

death itself, cited by Philip, is hardly to be explained by the social circles in which Godwin moved; and someone who thinks that there might be indefinite life without benefit of medicine is unlikely to balk at social cohesion without benefit of government. The answer to Philip's problem, on both points, lies, as Godwin himself knew it did, in his being "viciously persuadable" not just by the arguments of others but also by his own, his determination to follow any chain of reasoning to its ultimate conclusion. What Godwin lacked, as his friends well knew, was not sound reason – he had more than enough of that – but common sense.

Equally striking is Philip's attempt to play down the impact of Godwin's experience with Mary Wollstonecraft. His careful elucidation of Godwin's principles and practice in relation to sex and marriage makes the contrast between his caution before he and Mary were married and the outspokenness of the original *Memoirs* ten months later more striking than ever. But Philip is so far from remarking it that he can still say of Godwin's change of mind, and heart, about the domestic affections, first stated in these same *Memoirs*, that "the explanation... lies in the collapse of the social conditions... we need an account of the changes that took place in Godwin's social milieu...".

Similarly, I am not at all persuaded that it was the break-up of the radical intellectual community, as opposed to the collapse of their political programme, which led Godwin to lose faith in the perfectibility of man through rational discussion; and it is surely stretching a point to suggest that the collapse of that community also accounts for his own fall from fame when, more plausibly, these were separate, if related, results of the success of the "anti-Jacobin" reaction. Even where Philip is on stronger ground, as in his explanation of the first revision of *Political Justice* in terms of Godwin's widening social circle, he overplays his hand: if Godwin got new ideas from that wider circle, he must also have got them from particular people. And in drawing his evidence for the collapse of those circles from a lessening in Godwin's social contacts, he ignores the fact that Godwin's personal position was now very different: no longer the celebrated man-about-town, but a weary widower with two small children.

Some of these disagreements are symptomatic of a wider difficulty, which is Philip's rather awkward striving after originality. There is, in fact, much in this book which is both new and important: the reassessment of the influence on Godwin of the *philosophes*, for example, and especially the analysis of *Caleb Williams*, which provides a better explanation of that book's revised ending than I would have thought possible. Nevertheless, many of the

points which Philip makes have been made before, if not always in such detail, yet he always to present himself as taking issue with Godwin's previous commentators and critics. For example, he opposes those who regard the radicalism of the early 1790s as a passing enthusiasm, abandoned as soon as the going got tough. But though that might be true of some – and especially, I should have thought, of those who gave Godwin his equally passing popularity – no one, I think, has claimed that the radical movement as a whole. Again, he criticizes those who take Godwin's attitude, his word, without recognizing what Godwin himself recognized, that you can lose your idealism without losing the principles and beliefs which originally sprang from it. More crudely, he argues powerfully for the view that Godwin was as utilitarian as he has been painted. This is in relation to *Political Justice*'s final chapter, and when he gets to the second he more quietly concedes the point. Yet one of those whom he criticizes for describing Godwin as "merely a classical utilitarian" was explicitly discussing the second edition in comparison with the first.

Nevertheless this is an important work whose virtues – not least its impressive detail – far outweigh its defects. Philip's often imbalanced argument is always clearly stated and support signposted, without being unduly repetitive or heavy-handed. This is a major contribution to the growing body of work on one of the great giants of philosophy, literature and political thought.

Before morality

Julia Annas

MICHAEL NILL
Morality and Self-Interest in Protagoras, Antiphon and Democritus
120pp. Leiden: Brill. Hfl 42.
9004073191

Moral philosophy as a reasonably self-conscious discipline is often thought to begin with Plato. But this belief, though found in antiquity, does injustice to the "sophists" whom Plato opposed. Michael Nill's book analyses a progression of thought in three fifth-century "pre-Socratic" philosophers. He finds in Protagoras a claim that moral requirements should be obeyed on the grounds that this is necessary for the existence of political co-operation, essential to the survival of all. Protagoras' arguments, however, are inadequate to show why an individual should be moral when this conflicts with self-interest. Antiphon points out starkly the ways in which moral requirements may demand that an agent act in a non or even counter-prudential way. And Nill finds in Democritus the same kind of answer as Plato's morality is in the agent's interest, and can be seen to be so once we consider an agent's overall happiness to lie not in piling up worldly goods but in developing a coherent and resilient attitude towards those goods.

The book is obviously a mildly reworked thesis, and suffers from highly selective (and increasingly abrupt) discussion of its three figures. Fuller treatment of Antiphon and Democritus, on both scholarly and philosophical issues, would have produced a much better book. But it is valuable all the same. It sets out clearly the philosophical context of Platonic ethics. And it shows us these sophists as comprehensible moral theorists in their own right. Too often "pre-Socratic" thinkers excite a kind of intellectual relativism in their interpreters. Lacking anything like our terminology, they are often presented as grand archaic figures in an intellectual fog, unable to distinguish things from qualities or minds from bodies. Nill shows convincingly that, while these thinkers have no word or matching concept for "moral", they are talking about morality; that they clearly see a problem with it, and that their problem is recognizably the same as what we call the problem of morality and self-interest. It would be nice if this book led to further intelligent and rigorous discussion of the Socratic moral philosophy.

Credulity into faith

Mary Beard

ROBIN LANE FOX
Pagans and Christians
799pp. Viking. £17.95.
0670808482
MARTA SORDI
The Christians and the Roman Empire
Translated by Annabel Bedini
215pp. Croom Helm. £18.95.
070944217

The rise of Christianity has been curiously neglected by historians of the Greco-Roman world. Only the persecutions have an established place in ancient history – and even here the focus has been on the Roman authorities: with what intent did they "persecute" the Christians? On what legal basis? Strikingly this is in relation to *Political Justice*'s final chapter, and when he gets to the second he more quietly concedes the point. Yet one of those whom he criticizes for describing Godwin as "merely a classical utilitarian" was explicitly discussing the second edition in comparison with the first.

Nevertheless this is an important work whose virtues – not least its impressive detail – far outweigh its defects. Philip's often imbalanced argument is always clearly stated and support signposted, without being unduly repetitive or heavy-handed. This is a major contribution to the growing body of work on one of the great giants of philosophy, literature and political thought.

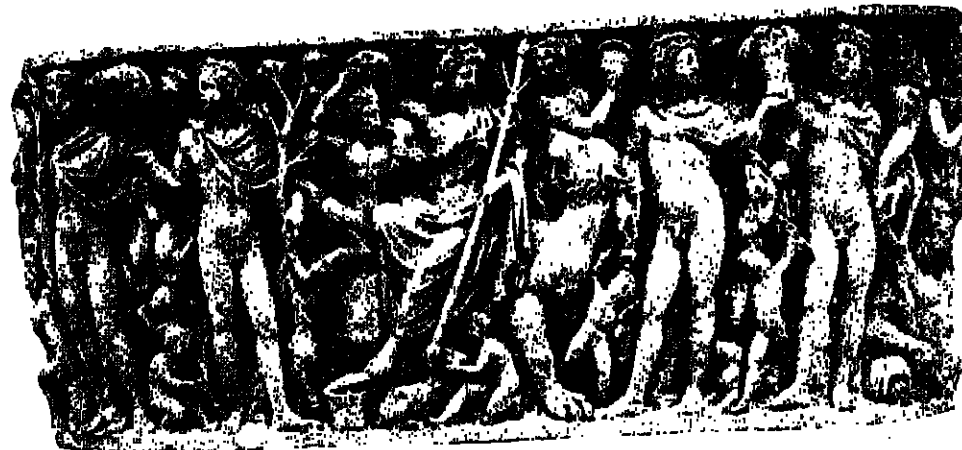
The reasons for this neglect are complex. There is, no doubt, in part, a residual sense that "our" religion (unlike Mithraism or the worship of Isis) can be no subject for disinterested historical investigation, certainly not by those without specialist theological understanding and the skills of biblical scholarship. But more to the point are the chronological limits traditional in the study of ancient history – at least in England. Linked closely to the study of classical literature, it has mainly focused its attention on those periods which coincide with the "golden ages" of literature and comes to a close with the last major authors in the canon – by the middle of the second century AD. Such a limit necessarily consigns Christianity to the wings – with just three more or less significant appearances on the Roman stage: the crucifixion of Christ, the persecution by Nero after the fire of Rome, and the problems caused by Christians for Pliny, while governor of Bithynia under Trajan.

Robin Lane Fox is part of the "new wave", which is reclaiming Christianity for mainstream ancient history. *Pagans and Christians*

is innovative in two particular respects. First, it sets out to explore both pagan and Christian religious practice in the context of city life in the Roman empire. All too often Christianity forms just a brief postscript to books on traditional paganism; or conversely the nature of paganism is barely outlined in hurried introductions to studies of early Christianity. Lane Fox rightly stresses that paganism and Christianity must be taken together within their common social and historical context; and that only then can the important continuity between the two systems, as well as the striking differences, be understood.

Second, in a book designed as much for the general reader as for the specialist, Lane Fox presents a picture of a largely unfamiliar part of the ancient world. He evokes particularly the society of the Roman cities of Asia Minor between the second and fourth centuries AD; and the sources he uses are refreshingly different, a far cry from Cicero, Sallust, Tacitus and the other standard classics. We find not just little-known Christian authors, but also splendid pagan writing from outside the canon, unfamiliar to all but a few specialists – Lucian's satire of the mid-second century AD, for example, on the somewhat dubious pagan prophet Alexander from the city of Abonoteichos; or Artemidorus' five books on dream interpretation of about the same date. Even less familiar to the non-specialist is the wealth of evidence drawn from the public inscriptions of these eastern cities – recording the texts of oracular responses, the fulfilment of particular sacrifices, as well as the religious and political careers of the local elites. This "epigraphic habit", a passion for inscribing publicly information of all types, has long been a major interest among professional historians; but sadly it has rarely been thought worth sharing with the general public.

Lane Fox's greatest talent, however, lies in his capacity for narrative and his gift for evocative description. Although by no means a narrative history of the decline of paganism and the growth of Christianity, the book seems most successful when it takes time to explore one incident or the story of one individual in some detail. So, for example, the history of Alexander of Abonoteichos is deftly drawn – taking in not only the allegations of Lucian that the man was a complete fraud, who had easily conned the ignorant people of the surrounding area, but also setting those allegations in the context of the other evidence for a religious world in and so drawing a picture of a religious world in which the extremes of scepticism and credulity were equally possible alternatives. Likewise the story of Hermas, the early Christian vision-



Dionysos, the Seasons and other figures – a relief on a Roman sarcophagus of about 220 to 230 AD. The photograph is taken from Classical Mediterranean Spirituality: Egyptian, Greek, Roman, edited by A. H. Armstrong (517pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £39.50. 0 7102 10965).

ary, who saw elaborate visions of the (pagan or Jewish) Sybil, the personified Church and the Christian angels, clearly illustrates the composite cultural background of early Christian experience.

But narrative has its own drawbacks. A talent for story-telling almost inevitably deflects Lane Fox from the kind of analysis that does not readily emerge from a narrative framework; and it predisposes him to linear or univalent explanations, where precisely the opposite seems required. This happens most clearly over the notorious problem of the "conversion" of the emperor Constantine.

Constantine was baptized a Christian on his death-bed in 337. Up to that point his relationship with Christianity had been unclear. There are indications of an attachment: before his battle against Maxentius in 312 he was said to have seen a vision of the Cross; and throughout his reign he bestowed favours and patronage on the Church, sponsoring, for example, a lavish series of new church buildings. But equally he made no complete break with pagan tradition: he continued to hold the pagan religious office of *pontifex maximus*; much of the official art of the reign (such as the famous arch at Rome) showed no departure from pagan forms; while the coinage paraded pagan symbolism.

Lane Fox is concerned to evaluate the evidence on either side and "to make a choice" between Constantine the convinced Christian and Constantine the residual pagan. He comes down firmly on the side of a Christian Constantine – basing the argument largely on a re-examination of his *Oratio to the Saints*, a speech often assumed to have been rewritten and Christianized by later hands. Many indi-

vidual points in this analysis are telling; but the whole question is surely misconceived. To put the problem in terms of whether Constantine was really a Christian or really a pagan is to miss the more fundamental point that, in a period of transition between paganism and Christianity, the whole notion of religious adherence was itself being redefined. In our terms, Constantine may have been both a pagan and a Christian – not because he was trying to have his cake and eat it; but because "what it was to be a Christian" was itself a matter of debate. Lane Fox is not, of course, the first to fall into this trap; but in his case he is drawn to this method of argument by his narrative framework, in which such questions as "was Constantine a Christian and from when?" seem necessary and uniquely relevant.

This criticism applies also to his chapters on paganism, where major questions on the nature of polytheism and the centrality of the ritual of sacrifice are passed by. Nevertheless this is an important book. Anyone wishing clearly to perceive its virtues is recommended to turn to Marta Sordi's account in *The Christians and the Roman Empire*. Here we seem in as a world of fantasy, with Seneca brought in as a probable friend of St Paul (even if the supposed correspondence between them is acknowledged as spurious) and the emperor Tiberius proposing to the Roman senate that Christ should be recognized as a god. Perhaps Sordi's most extraordinary passage is that in which the single-minded young martyr St Perpetua is lauded for her "youthful exuberance" and her "love of fun". As Robin Lane Fox makes absolutely clear, "love of fun" is a quality striking for its absence among the early saints.

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308pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £15.
019 8279874

"Anyone who goes through Queen's [University] gets his mind broadened from the religious and academic point of view, not broadened in that you change your views, but you learn to articulate them." This throwaway line is delivered by an activist in Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party, interviewed in the course of Ed Moloney and Andy Pollak's *Paisley*. It leads us to the core of a culture which redefines "broadmindedness" as the expression of a refusal to change one's mind.

It follows that the phenomenal success of Paisleyism cannot be understood, or even satisfactorily explained, through the typology of "rational", literally oriented sociological or political theorizing. History, being obstinately irrational as well as non-prescriptive, may have more enlightenment to offer – a truth which Moloney and Pollak, and also Steve Bruce, in his book *God Save Ulster*, have intuited. Empirical investigation sticks at the level set by a panellist on *Question Time*, broadcast from Ulster a couple of years ago. A Democratic Unionist Party integrationist belittled from the floor: "Why should we be treated any differently from any other part of the United Kingdom?" "Because", came the weary, exasperated, uncomprehending reply, "because you kill each other here."

So they do. And in considering the fact that so many of them endorse leaders who implicitly excuse, or at least rationalize, violent conflict, the bull-necked silhouette of Ian Paisley inevitably looms. Active in the subculture of Belfast evangelical Protestantism for decades, Paisley founded his breakaway Free Presbyterian Church in Ravenhill Road in 1951; but he came to the wider world's attention in the early 1960s with highly stage-managed public protests against ecumenism; the supposed accommodation of Roman Catholic influence by the Northern Ireland state, and the attempts of Prime Minister Terence O'Neill to open an era of good relations with the Republic. With the disintegration of the late 1960s and early 1970s, Paisley became a more overtly political figure: founding Protestant pressure groups (often with a rather murky paramilitary dimension), gaining parliamentary seats both for the old Northern Ireland Parliament and then at Westminster, setting up the Democratic Unionist Party in 1971, and winning a personal landslide victory in the European elections of 1979. Since then, his enormous and increasing influence (especially over working-class Unionists) has been cast raucously against initiatives like the power-sharing executive set up in 1973, the Constitutional Convention of 1977, the Anglo-Irish summit of 1980 and – inevitably – the Pope's visit to Britain.

Contrary to the reiterated expectations of observers of the Ulster scene, he has not gone away; his support has not declined; he has not been marginalized. The Free Presbyterian Church has grown to sixty congregations (ten of them outside Ulster). His Democratic Unionist Party has challenged the Official Unionists for the representation of Ulster's Protestant people, and runs them close. His denunciations bellow through the European Parliament at Strasbourg as well as at Westminster. Yet he remains as unconcerned as his forerunner, W. P. Nicholson, who contested the "modernizing" theology of Ernest Davy in the 1920s and inspired a subsequent series of fundamentalist breakaways from mainstream Presbyterianism, (Paisley, significantly, makes much of Nicholson's presence at his own controversial ordination.) Through Paisley, latter-day fundamentalism has found a religious and political voice. To the bemused outsider, in the Republic as well as elsewhere, two questions inevitably occur: can he mean it? And why do people listen to him? There are different ways of looking for

answers. Moloney and Pollak, both distinguished journalists, borrow some techniques from the newspaper exposé: their readiness to use words like "fanatical", "vicious" and even "loony" does little justice to the sober quality of much of their analysis. Their account concentrates, first, on Paisley's youth and religious pedigree; a very useful section then profiles his followers and their attitudes; finally they embark on a rather breathless gallop through the political calendar of the last fifteen years or so. The structure has its advantages, but necessitates repetition when protagonists have to be repeatedly reintroduced in different guises. The authors are also ready to highlight sexual aspects of the Free Presbyterian phenomenon: not only Paisley's own phallic denunciations of what he sees as Papist phallos-worship, and the sect's obsession with the lurid details of life in convents and the marriages of ex-priests, but also the high incidence of pederasty among some of Paisley's eminent supporters – a particular embarrassment for a leader who has strenuously campaigned to prevent the extension of post-Wolfenden norms to Northern Ireland. (The urbane Lord Gower, newly arrived in Northern Ireland as Deputy Secretary of State in 1981, kept hearing sibilant references to "SUS", which he assumed meant police harassment on suspicion, as in Brixton or Notting Hill. It took some time for him to discover that it was the acronym for the Free Presbyterian campaign to "Save Ulster from Sodomy".)

Steve Bruce's approach by contrast, is a determinedly low-key sociological enquiry, defiantly unimpressed by theoretical generalizations, and painstaking about examining assumptions and value-systems. Assuming a secular readership, he provides a number of rather engagingly laborious explanations of religious concepts, some of which indicate that a good demotic preacher has been lost to the Sociology Department at Queen's (the way that being "called" combines with "conviction of sin" to produce the state of being "saved" is compared to a component adhesive like Araldite). But Bruce deserves praise for his firm reiteration that a religious sense cannot be dismissed as "unreasonable", or rationalized into Pavlovian social mechanics, and he comes nearer than most previous commentators (David Miller, in his *Queen's Rebels*, excepted) to an enlightening view of the Ulster Protestant political mind. His book can be read with much more profit than most in the field, though it should be added that both he and Moloney / Pollak owe much to Clifford Smyth's recent PhD thesis on the DUP (Queen's University, 1984), currently awaiting publication.

On the question of whether Paisley really means it, an important point emerges from both studies: even if events since 1968 have conspired to present him as a prophet, greatly enhancing both his spiritual and his political authority, his stance long predates the latest Troubles, and is in a sense independent of them. Moloney and Pollak's fascinating early chapters trace his path from the political manoeuvrings in the Dock ward election of 1949, through the conflicts between the Ravenhill minister and the Unionist establishment in the 1950s, culminating in his response to Terence O'Neill's overtures to the Catholic minority at home, and to rampant ecumenism abroad, in the mid-1960s. This material relates closely to the vociferous autobiographical tendency in fundamentalist Puritanism: the need to take on oneself the righteous struggle with what Tom Paulin, in his article on Paisley in the *London Review of Books*, April 1-14, 1982, called a "passionate self-regard". Bruce, by contrast, concentrates on the structure and beliefs of evangelical Protestantism at large, and sees Paisley as part of a general syndrome. Both approaches establish his need for "separatism" – the drive to achieve spiritual and political purification by tactics which are obsessively adversarial. (This too is in the tradition; Nicholson, advised by the government not to preach against Catholics, simply turned to preaching against fellow-Presbyterians instead.)

The fundamentalist's overwhelming necessity to "testify" is closely linked with the old, predestinarian double bind: even if you are inevitably marked for salvation (or perdition), the more fiercely you testify, the more

likely it will appear, to yourself as well as others, that you are saved. Bruce quotes a Free Presbyterian convert who sums up the vital distinction between ordinary Christian observance (Anglican-style) and being saved:

I was completely ignorant of what not only Presbyterianism was but also what the Gospel was. I had no idea. Sunday School all my life, youth fellowship all my life. Went to church every Sunday practically. Never, never was confronted with the fact that the Bible condemned me as a lost sinner.

The chief outward distinguishing-mark that follows – besides Sabbatarianism and temperance – is the need to speak out, to offend the ungodly, to testify *contra hominem*: that violent personalization of rhetoric shared by Ulster churchmen, politicians and literary critics. (The titles of Paisley's sermons are an indication: "The Devil in the Pigskin Swim-suit", "The Pig with the Permanent Wave"; or, in the political world, his interpretation of the amiable Foreign Minister of the Irish Republic, Peter Barry, as a stand-in for Satan.) This enthusiasm for personal exhortation is often attributed to provincialism, but it owes at least as



much to religion. The other great theme is the yearning for "separation" – glossed by Republican wishful thinkers as a process that may eventually drive Paisley to lead his people out of the Union and into a new relationship with the rest of Ireland. This attractive vision of apocalypse, given some apparent substance by odd remarks by Paisley over the years, has been discredited by his vituperative reaction to the Hillsborough Agreement. On the issue of enabling a degree of control of Ulster's affairs to be shared between Britain and the Republic, it appears, he has expressed the voice of a formidable number of "his" people; but many were thinking along with him already.

Why? For one thing, he was there, already articulating fears and obsessions which seemed confirmed by every swirl of the descent into the maelstrom that began in the late 1960s with the Civil Rights campaign and the subsequent Protestant backlash. The rise of the Provisional IRA, the collapse of Ulster's devolved Parliament at Stormont, the increasing impatience of British administrations exercising thankless direct rule, the evident wish of the British public for a face-saving withdrawal, the pitiful record of the succession of Official Unionist political leaders who have inarticulately postured on their tiny stage: all this creates the perfect context for Paisleyism. At the level of the infrastructure, Bruce's conclusion makes a vital point: given that no moderate "centre" existed to be occupied in Northern Ireland's politics, Paisley's version of the politics of Protestantism answered a visceral need: he "achieved his prominence by offering the most explicit and articulate representation of evangelical Protestant unionism".

Evangelicalism is, in a sense, Unionist politics. Even if Terence O'Neill's tactical sense had been less dim, his idea of Ulster as a modernized Eurostatelet, with strong economic ties south of the border, stood little chance. Max Weber notwithstanding, Protestantism did not add up to that. Here, leaving the sense of a divine mandate, the obsession with decoding Old Testament

revelations for application to the Ulster case, the belief in a nation of British Israelites planted in a land which God has taken under his special protection. Bruce's contribution to understanding the political mobilization which accompanies this evangelicalism is striking (and more rigorous than Moloney and Pollak's). A contemptuous dismissal of cosmopolitanism comes through strongly. Paisley only on identified the World Council of Churches as a Satanic instrument. The compromising manoeuvres of Establishment politicians provide a self-fulfilling prophecy of chaos. And episodes like the massacre at the Darkley Pentecostal meeting-house in 1983 may be taken as reasonable proof that Antichrist walks abroad in Ireland.

It is against this ready-made scenario that Paisley the politician must be evaluated. Moloney and Pollak analyse his performance closely, preoccupied by what they consider his deviousness and his calculations: so much so, that when examining his "mistakes" a rather slippery approach is taken. Whatever he does, he is presented as benefitting politically. The even damp squibs like the failed 1977 general strike against direct rule from Whitehall, and Paisley's parade of an alleged new paramilitary force before shivering journalists during a mid-night rendezvous in 1981, appear, obsciously, as manoeuvres which enhance his position. In fact, they were "mistakes" in political terms which mattered not at all to the real basis of his support. The Party remains, by and large, true, because the values of the Free Presbyterians are endorsed by such a large proportion of its membership. Bruce is careful to distinguish between the political and the religious organization of Paisleyism, but their joint effect is overwhelming. When Moloney and Pollak go to some trouble to mock Paisley's addition to the questionable or purchased qualifications which string letters after his name, implying that this detracts from his political credibility, they miss the point. Such accoutrements are firmly in the tradition of nineteenth-century autodidactic populist evangelicals; and it is this tradition that underpins Paisley's political appeal.

Similarly, it is beside the point to overinterpret Paisley's remarks in 1971 that the principal objection to a United Ireland was the Constitution of the Irish Republic. This did not indicate a readiness to bargain; to Paisley, the idea of a Catholic country not having a theocratic constitution is an impossibility. This is not incompatible with canny populist touches like his care for his handful of Catholic constituents on Rathlin Island, or, at the moment, his daughter's readiness to compromise a Dublin television chat-show, and his own readiness to appear on it. In another context, he has manipulated working-class resentment at "fur-coat Unionism" and O'Neill's "nasal twang", as a Member of the European Parliament (an involvement oddly side-lined by Moloney and Pollak); he has tremendously enhanced his domestic credibility. The huge constituency covered by the European electoral contest enabled him to highlight his formidable vote-getting power; and his activities in the Parliament have shown him wheeling and dealing when necessary, but chiefly using the forum to bring home the message of evangelical Unionism whenever the opportunity arises. The bedrock of his political faith is The Province; to search for opportunism in his position is irrelevant. Those creative opportunistic politicians who gravitate to him inevitably leave his orbit in the end.

His direct connections with paramilitary activity remain dubious. If his exhortations lead in that direction, he draws back at the last (and the formal DUP line on violence has, until very recently, been studiously moderate). But the connection – personal as well as historical – between Paisley and the notorious J. W. Nelson of the pre-war paramilitary United Protestant League is suggestive. Free Presbyterian connections in a number of grisly Protestant paramilitary groups are a matter of record (though Bruce points out that much-publicized statements linking Paisley with assassination squads of the Shankill Ulster Volunteer Force in 1966 were later withdrawn). What is undeniable is that the rhetoric of Paisleyism is threatening, apocalyptic and committed to confrontation. In this, it follows historical tradition. Nineteenth-century Protestant street

Prophets of Liberation

David Lehmann

SCOTT MAINWARING
The Catholic Church and Politics in Brazil, 1916-1985
352pp. Stanford University Press. £27.50.
08047 13200

The Catholic Church in Brazil has about 12,500 priests, and more than 400 bishops, but it remains a quantitatively small institution, most of whose followers only participate passively; and it has few material resources. In a working-class area the Pentecostal or Adventist church, and the local Spiritist cult centre, are there for all to see; the Catholic church is not. Yet the Church and its personnel seem to command a "space" in the culture and in political discourse far greater than that of these other, half-complementary institutions, and far out of proportion to its wealth and personnel. Understanding the precise nature of this "space" – if that is the right term – and the reason for its existence is an essential preliminary step to understanding the role of Christianity in Latin American societies. But with one or two notable exceptions, few have addressed themselves to it.

Scott Mainwaring's story, in *The Catholic Church and Politics in Brazil, 1916-1985*, is simple enough and his scholarly diligence confirms the picture provided by most of the current Brazilian literature on the subject. From the 1920s, the Church leadership made strenuous efforts to recover its influence in society, both through fairly close co-operation with the State and through Catholic Action and other lay corporations – which operated under tight hierarchical supervision. In this it had some success, but new challenges arose with Vatican II and also with that peculiar combination of torture, economic growth and deepening social inequality which made up what has come to be known as Brazil's *capitalismo selvagem* (savage capitalism). (It is said that Delfim Netto, the Planning Minister, coined the phrase.)

At the same time there occurred a gradual reappraisal of official Church policy on social questions and also a serious crisis of vocations. This combination of internal and external transformation, in an atmosphere where the highest ecclesial authority seemed to legitimate challenges to accepted wisdom, could not fail to be explosive. The attack on social inequality, described as "institutionalized" or "structural" violence at the Latin American Bishops' Conference in Medellín in 1968, became official usage, taking its place alongside the defence of human rights. Priests and bishops found themselves embroiled in serious conflicts with landowners and with the authorities. Theologians of Liberation found a receptive public – though their enthusiastic publisher, the Franciscans' *Voices*, is now undergoing a change of editorial direction as a result of pressure from the Vatican.

In the early and mid-1960s there had been serious crises in the Church's relations with traditional lay groups like Catholic Young Workers and Young Students – described well by Mainwaring – when these adopted a style of politicization at once too remote from religious rhythms and rituals and too politically radical for the hierarchy. Since the early 1970s, when the Church acted to some extent as the protector of grass-roots oppositional politics, lay groups developed a direction and style which marked them off clearly from the Catholic Action of old. Many began to take seriously an ecclesiology akin to that of Leonardo Boff – of a Church "born of a people's faith" and not of episcopal authority. These groups are more loosely related to the hierarchy than their predecessors, but they use educational material which draws heavily on the Bible, especially the Old Testament – notably and notoriously the justifying Agrarian Reform; they build on the cadre-training activities of the Catholic lay movements, and are often financed, through the intermediation of the Church, by international charities. Their ideology is one of *basismo* – a belief that the people at the human roots know best; and their motto is that grass roots, construed very broadly, include economic and social justice.

This phenomenon has provoked much polemic, and Mainwaring – despite his evident sympathy – is quite critical of it, on grounds of rationalities of both ends and means is ignored by political science. Scott Mainwaring's approach to the much-idolized base – where he might have uncovered this dimension of his subject – is gingerly. His case-studies concentrate on local political and social conflict, and do not touch at all on the way in which the popular classes which he so admires actually experience the Church and Christian ritual and belief. Even more striking – given his devotion to written sources – is the absence of any analysis of the texts of the Popular Church. Where are the themes of Exodus, of prophecy in the Old Testament style, of journeying to a destiny (*caminhada*), which so dominate its innumerable pamphlets? Of course, the fact that arguments are religious does not mean that there are no factions; furious disagreements and struggles about both religious and worldly matters are the bread and butter of ecclesial life. But the fundamental difference in this context – as opposed to that of a political party – is that people may stand up for a principle not because they want to pursue the goals it points to but simply for the pleasure or satisfaction of standing up and being counted. That is what Churches are for.

political efficacy. But the whole discussion is misconceived. The Church is not a political party; neither the Church itself nor those who work in and with it can be described as if they were exclusively or even principally dedicated to the pursuit of social and political goals. Mainwaring states this view at great length in his first chapter, but then proceeds obviously, as in his tedious description of the internal politics of the Church as a system of warring tribes – "conservatives", "moderates", "progressives" and "reformists" fighting it out in pamphlets, meetings and conspiracies. This both confuses – because the terms are used loosely and never defined – and gives a misleading impression of the dividing-lines among and between the clergy and the laity.

The "Popular Church", if Mainwaring's chapter on it is to be believed, is defined exclusively by its "this-worldly" political positions; but important as these are, that definition misses the agonizing dilemma posed by practices and beliefs, variously described as popular culture, religion or religiosity, for priests and "pastoral agents" who seek to persuade their flock of the virtues of revolutionary solidarity in the name of high ideals. The cross-crossing of

Converts and opponents

David Helliwell

JACQUES GERNET
China and the Christian Impact: A conflict of cultures
Translated by Janet Lloyd
310pp. Cambridge University Press. £30
(paperback, £12.50).
0521 266815

The growing reputation of Jacques Gernet in the English-speaking world will be enhanced by the translation of his latest major work, *China and the Christian Impact: A conflict of cultures* (reviewed in the TLS, June 24, 1983). This is the second book by the distinguished French sinologist to have appeared in English translation in recent years, and it will receive wide distribution under the joint publishing agreement between the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme and Cambridge University Press. The book is an intellectual rather than chronological

history of the Jesuit mission to China, original as well as rigorously objective in its approach. Through extensive quotation of the views of both missionaries and Chinese converts or opponents, the contrast between Chinese and Western thought is demonstrated vividly. The generally good quality of the translation makes the occasional lapse the more surprising – for example, "a constitutive element" (p53) and "mimelism" (p115). Also, a more sensitive consideration of the subject-matter might have given clearer meaning to a number of muddling Gallicisms: for example, "the veracity of these resemblances" (p5); "an enterprise of seduction" (p15).

The author doubtless approved the English title, with its rather different nuance. A few errors in romanization have crept into this edition: "tain" for "tian" (p54); "Taxi" for "Taixi" (p66); and for £30 one expects the footnotes to appear at the foot of the page, as in the original Gallimard edition of 1982, and not inconveniently lumped together at the end of the volume.

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COMMENTARY

Shepherd's Bush gothic

David Nokes

JANE AUSTEN
Northanger Abbey
BBC2

In the Stock Exchange of literary reputations Jane Austen is a blue chip name. Dickens may fluctuate as Galsworthy tumbles and Aphra Behn soars, but Austen remains as solid an investment as Coca Cola or Levi jeans. Like other brand leaders, however, her stock is subject to counterfeits, and this latest *Northanger Abbey* seems in serious danger from the Trades Descriptions Act. Maggie Wadey's adaptation is described as being "from the novel by Jane Austen": "from" is a very modest word to use.

"Purists", boasts the *Radio Times*, "will not be happy" with the liberties which the film has taken with the book. For, though the events and characters remain more or less in place, they are so modernized in idiom and style that the film's period details seem like props in an elaborate fancy-dress party. What is entirely missing is the light but serious tone of ridicule, the voice of reason at play. From first to last Jane Austen's narrative is witty, detached, ironic, but the ninety-minute film lacks any such controlling voice or tone. Its continuities are supplied by Ilona Sekacz's musical score, which ranges from saxophone blues to sepulchral monkish chants; and by a visual style of seductive spectacle and overt sensuality. Shot largely in close-up, the film replaces Austen's

conversation-piece style with a succession of dialogues of meaningful glances. Katherine Schlessinger as Catherine Morland acts mainly with her eyes, casting moony, soulful glances at all she meets. Peter Firth as Henry Tilney and Jonathan Coy as John Thorpe are equally fluent, employing a full vocabulary of ogles, leers, lascivious glances and knowing stares which reinforce the verbal innuendoes of a script which labours to make Jane Austen sexy. When General Tilney (Robert Hardy) commends Catherine on "the charming elasticity of your walk" his words, and accompanying leer, have a lubricity quite absent from the narrator's use of a similar phrase in the novel. Isabella's worldly remark, "You know how it is with men, they take no denial", is delivered with a lip-smacking eroticism. Cassie Stuart plays Isabella as a flouncing, bouncing flirt with a heaving bosom and a rolling eye, who seems to have tumbled straight from the pages of *Moll Flanders* or *Fanny Hill*. The Tilney brothers snort snuff (we are never told that Henry is a clergyman), and among the bizarre inhabitants of the Abbey is a black-clad marchioness in death's-head make-up.

Producers and directors may sometimes despair of pleasing their critics when it comes to televising literary classics. If they play safe they are accused of an O level literal-mindedness, while if they attempt, as here, to reinterpret the work in cinematic terms they run into the charge of travesty. It should be said that this is no crude or routine piece of vulgarization but an ambitious failure, an enterprising

and often highly polished attempt to produce a *Northanger Abbey* for our times. The director Giles Foster has evidently tried to establish cinematic parallels for the delicious frisson of fear which Anne Radcliffe's gothic fictions inspired in Catherine Morland's teenage imagination. His solution, using imagery drawn from Hammer horror films and from Mills and Boon romance, deliberately exploits the status of both as clichés to inveigle viewers into a self-conscious identification with Catherine's adolescent fantasies. It is a device which, used with greater tact and control, might well have succeeded, but merging into the film's overall seductive sensuality these images lose their ironic force, becoming part of a larger romantic fantasy. This persists until the end, when Peter Firth looms out of the mists on his white horse to sweep Catherine into his arms for a final lingering kiss.

The film has some marvellous visual moments which almost compensate, in their opulence, for its lack of structural coherence. The tea-party in the Roman bath at Bath is a scene worthy of Fellini, with ladies, in bonnets piled high with ostrich feathers, exchanging polite conversation while immersed in the breasts in the steaming waters. Indeed hats provide the film's nearest equivalent to wit. Google Withers plays Mrs Allen as a Regency Edna Everage with a new hat for every scene. Turbans and coils, broad-brims and bonnets sprout from her head like exotic blooms. It is only a pity that the script shows more confidence in millinery than in irony.

Founding fathers and original intentions

Arthur Jacobs

JEAN-BAPTISTE LULLY
Alys
Opéra-Comique, Paris

Until recently, early French opera has enjoyed a far less vigorous revival than its Italian counterpart. But Rameau has begun to gather stage performances and recordings, and last year the Aix-en-Provence Festival did honour to the city's native son with a staging of *Campra's Tancrède*. Now at last Paris has seen fit to salute the founding father, Lully; ironically, not at Lully's own institution, the Opéra, but in a production of *Alys* (1676) at the lesser house, the Opéra-Comique.

The curious paradox which besets the staging of such early operas was very much in evidence. As to the music, no trouble is thought too great in order to reproduce the composer's imagined sound as closely as possible. The editor labours to produce a faithful text, the conductor strives to assemble the historically correct voices and instruments, performing the right music with the right ornamentation and at

the correct pitch. Dance is also displayed (as in this case) according to contemporary precepts. But as for scenery, as for gesture, as for an action founded on historical principles of the theatre — all this is readily abandoned. Jean-Marie Villégier actually put forward as his director's principle "a refusal to read the stage directions provided by the libretto".

So what did he propose in their place? In the mythological prologue (where Time, Flora and the other personages remind us of the glories of Le Roi Soleil) we seemed to be witnessing a rehearsal: a stage manager was on hand to urge, beckon, and adjust. For the five acts of the tragedy itself, the characters in their Louis Quatorze costumes stood to deliver their music, or were paraded in elegant motion — but without a focus of locality, and without such a purposeful sequence as would have been originally provided by perspectives, machinery, and descents from above. The spirit of *divertissement*, happily, was just enough to rescue the evening from visual ennui.

In sound, however, both "Les paroles de M. Quinault et la musique de M. de Lully" (to quote from the original order of authorship) were equally cherished. Clarity of words, from

chorus as well as from soloists, was beautifully maintained under the conductorship of the American, William Christie. Employing his own celebrated Paris-based ensemble, Les Arts Florissants, he made a pointed and euphonious contrast between the instruments of the "petit chœur" and "grand chœur". In the vocal delivery, he secured that combination of elegance and passion which proved the text-books' point about how well Lully's vocal line supports a correct rhetorical declamation.

In the cast I saw (the eleven performances admitted some changes), the Belgian tenor Guy de Mey sang and moved stylishly as the young hero Alys (Attis) who is desired by the goddess Cybele but loves the mortal Sangaride. Bernard Deletré provided comic relief as Sanger. In a quartet for Sleep, Morpheus, Phobos and Fantasy, an ensemble of costumed players of recorders and lutes was brought on stage with ravishing effect.

The dancing had a fluency and vigour rarely found in British essays in this mode of choreography. Lully, if not completely restored to the theatre, at least asserts his presence, as the forthcoming recording of this production should confirm.

Troupe effects

Eric Sams

COLE PORTER
Kiss Me, Kate
Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

The Royal Shakespeare Company has now decided to offer us a musical extravaganza loosely related to one of the plays. Nothing new in that, its detractors will claim; and indeed its younger supporters might have been forgiven for thinking they were watching the company's latest version of *The Taming of the Shrew*, instead of the 1948 Cole Porter musical on that theme. This production no doubt aims at a long and profitable London run, like its predecessor *Les Misérables*; and it will appeal to any audience that would rather be wowed than wooed. It is just as sensuously and physically assaulting as any *Petruchio* or *Kate*; some of the orchestral effects are not unlike having a musical instrument broken over one's head. Conversely, as we have come to expect from the designer William Dudley, the sets are a sustained delight to the eye. The story-line of real-life love, rivalry and intrigue among Shakespearean actors touring their Italian play through the American provinces is brilliantly symbolized by scenic contrast between backstage realism and caricatured *commedia dell'arte*.

There, however, the explanations end. Even the programme is so preoccupied with spoof and send-up, period parody and pastiche, that it omits to offer any coherent account of the show's complex plot and structure. Yet *Kiss Me, Kate* is likely to be unfamiliar to most

theatregoers; indeed, its spoken style sounds far more dated than the Shakespearean material it borrows. I think the book (by Sam and Bella Spewack) should have been treated with far more simplicity and restraint, as in the *Nicholas Nickleby* presentation of the Crummles' travelling theatre company and its interactions with real life. There too we are meant to wonder which is which. At Stratford, all's one. The entire stage and pit repeatedly explode into undifferentiated pandemonium, too often rearranged beyond recognition as well as amplified beyond endurance. Even with the whole cast wired for sound, the witty lyrics are sometimes inaudible among the general uproar.

But Porter's work belongs more in Covent Garden than in the discotheque. We hear his show-stoppers only when that sort of show has stopped. His standards prevail as soon as attention is focussed on a small group instead of the total troupe, and the original score is allowed to speak and sing for itself in all its relaxed and sinuous felicity. Such moments are rare pleasures, in every sense. "Tom, Dick or Harry" goes with an authentic swing; but Flora Hendley (Lola/Blanca) is too talented an artist to need any hint of Marilyn Monroe impressions. Paul Jones is in vigorously virile form and voice as the heroic shrew-tamer; but I feel that his pop-star style is misplaced if not miscast. In general the ceaseless bustle of business leaves little time for the playfully erotic tenderness that suffuses the songs and choruses. Too many of the tempi are in hectic overdrive; "Wonderbar", for example, is anything but, while "Too Darn Hot" quite loses its cool.

Whenever the work is shown the respect due to a masterpiece of its genre it responds with genuine warmth, and so does the audience. Nicholas McAuliffe leads the way in this direction, like a real star. She can vary her vocal colouring and characterization so compellingly that "I Hate Men" and "So In Love" sound equally persuasive; her final song of submission in the dual guise of Shakespeare's Kate and the actress Lilli Vanessi is a triumph of interpretation. Tim Flavin's dancing Lucento is lithely synchronized "with a nice bounce", as stipulated, among much individual musicality. The solo violin phrases are quietly eloquent. Thanks to Emil Wolk and John Bardon as the two self-improving gangsters, the concluding Tempo di Bowerly waltz song goes especially well. For a good half-hour after the show, home-going hums of "Brush Up Your Shakespeare" were heard along the streets of Stratford, that would have pleased the Bard.

A sense of exclusion

Frances Spalding

Eric Ravilious 1903-42
Crafts Council Gallery, until March 29

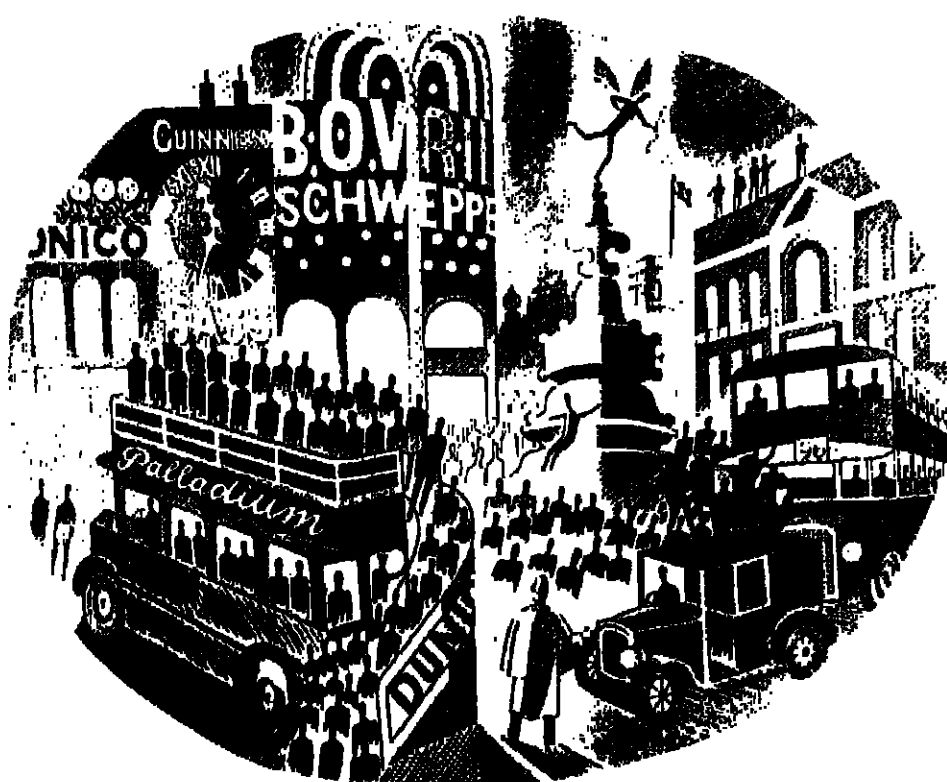
Few artists have straddled the divide between fine and applied art with Eric Ravilious's panache. There is a satisfying completeness to every item in this exhibition, whether it is a miniature wood-engraving for the 1933 Kynoch Press *Notebook*, a rustic motif for his "Garden" tableware or a crisp watercolour of the downs in winter. His images, even the more obviously decorative or deliberately artificial, seem to coalesce without strain. The overall effect is one of sustained buoyancy, a compactness that is nevertheless airy and light.

The apparent ease with which Ravilious found a pattern for his ideas partly explains his appeal. Having trained as a designer at the Royal College of Art, he began his career in the 1920s when "amusing" was a term of high praise. But this exhibition, mounted to satisfy growing interest and to offer a reassessment of his life and work, both charms and disquiets. Admittedly his drawings based on shops for the "High Street" lithographs affirm a sane and ordinary view, especially if compared in imagination with the bizarre satires that Edward Burra would have found in the same. Ravilious is undeniably one of the choicest and most easily enjoyable of English artists, but, with deepening familiarity, he is odder and more complex than he at first seems.

In this exhibition it is his watercolours of interiors that first alert one to a sense of melan-

choly and strain. He can make even a framed avenue in a greenhouse filled with carnations seem subtly disturbing. But in those pictures where wallpapers, frilled curtains, pelmets and iron bedsteads uphold the skimpiness of English taste, his empty rooms become strangely full of presence. They are inhabited by a light that is searing and chill. Ravilious's familiarity with wood-engraving, which transforms a negative intaglio into a positive image, would have sharpened his awareness of dualities. Moreover, the danger of obliteration through excess cutting would have taught him the annihilating potential of light.

His control of light gradually increases in subtlety. The blunt contrasts in the wood-engraving, "Church under a Hill" (1926), give way to the more even radiance of his design for the *Cornhill Magazine* prospectus (1933). In his watercolours the use of a starved brush, a technique learnt at the Royal College from Paul Nash, enables him to create effects of transparency and striation. These enhance his light which, in its asperity and lack of warmth, becomes the vehicle for his growing sense of displacement. Though Ravilious effortlessly updated traditional styles in his designs for Wedgwood, he adapted less well to the factional late 1930s and, according to his friend, J. M. Richards, "never lost a kind of wariness against all allegiances and personal involvements". The sense of exclusion in his landscapes, often conveyed by sharp, angular recession and harsh light, applied also to himself. Beneath the surface charm and ease of his work lay a restless spirit, a person to whom, as Richards observed, "nothing seemed settled or secure".



Design for a Boat-Race bowl by Eric Ravilious, from the exhibition reviewed here.

Megadeath and overkill

Valentine Cunningham

When the Wind Blows
Various cinemas

It's an ill-wind . . . as Jim Bloggs might put it were he to reflect on the way a strip cartoon about nuclear megadeath overtaking a very ordinary old couple has been metamorphosed into a mega-media event. Quiet little comic book turns into a radio play, becomes a stage play, gets transformed into a full-length cartoon feature film with a title song by David Bowie. The hype laps over you in a tide of newspaper, journal and television features. Wear the T-shirt, catch the movie, get the record. Fall-out acquires new meanings.

When the Wind Blows was from the start meagre on pictures and high on words. Radical strip-cartoons often are (Steve Bell's work, for instance). Raymond Briggs now says he would like to use words even more. He welcomed the radio and stage adaptations of his book as chances to do the voices on a larger scale.

Briggs's chief technique in his Father Christmas books was literalism. The attraction consisted in the way he layered realism on to myth by taking all myth's suppositions literally. "All these books are done on the same principle, just taking something that's wholly imaginary like Father Christmas and saying right, let's assume he does exist. He's got to live somewhere, he's got to go to bed and get up and do all the things everyone does." What Briggs does in *When the Wind Blows* is to inspect what happens when the texts that take literally the almost unimaginable (the dropping of nuclear bombs) are themselves taken literally.

Jim Bloggs is a reader. In fact he's the reader that governments might dream of, an obliging metonymist. For him the State's nuclear survival literature is to be taken as meaning precisely what it says. His literalism is part of his steady rationalistic explanation, his pragmatism and empiricism. (Of course lettuce evaporates in nuclear heat: "They do have a high water content".) He's a devotedly close reader awkwardly taking writing *au pied de la lettre*. But to its devotees in the end, of course, the letter killeth. The shelter built according to government specifications is no good at all against fall-out.

Jim Bloggs is not totally unacquainted with other kinds of reading-matter. He keeps quoting Tennyson ("Ours not to reason why"). His last words are "Rode the Six Hundred". They come at the end of a dying smatter of mythic and metaphoric tags from hymn-book, Bible, Prayer-Book and poem: "Oh God . . . Our Help in Ages Past . . . Dearly Beloved . . . Green Pastures . . . Into the Valley of the Shadow of Death". Language in all its modes of

possible deployment proves inadequate to cope with megadeath and overkill. Tennyson's heroics and Biblical pastoralism only provide grimly belated footnotes to the horror. Metaphor pokes warningly through Bloggs's warm colloquialism, his ordinary-language usage ("killed himself laughing", "bang in the middle", "all over in a flash"). And when Jim reads aloud — as the booklets exhort him to — in the Inner Core or Refuge, from a book entitled *Armageddon and You*, he is only pronouncing, to us and to his wife Hilda, the plight of the metonymist. "BMEWS (Ballistic-Missile-Early-Warning-System) . . . PARCS (Perimeter-Acquisition-Radar-Attack-Characterisation-System) . . . NORAD . . . JSS . . . ROCC . . . NADGE . . . AWACS . . . We should be all right with that lot looking after us, eh ducks?" The film version turns these acronyms into gigantic, monstrous alphabetical creatures, slithering sinisterly over the screen. When the Bomb is dropped there's an end of all words and images, a whiting out of all text whatsoever, in Briggs's most powerful statement yet, his gruesomely Shandyesque blank double-page which in the film becomes an empty screen.

The alphabetism of *Armageddon and You*, the euphemistic literalism of authorities, is indeed sinister. The Bloggess' response is desperately limited, unwise, too partially critical; but according to its lights it's an educated even sophisticated response, the result precisely of official educative pressures. It is astonishing that so many readers of Briggs's book persist in describing the Bloggess as naive people. Some even suppose that the strip-cartoon medium is 'intrinsically unsophisticated and that in *When the Wind Blows* the naivety of the form is simply endorsed by naive characters and naive sentiments. But all this is only a little more misguided than the kind of conspiracy promoted between Briggs and his public advocates to pretend that *When the Wind Blows* is not "attempting to make any propagandist or political statement". The *bande dessinée* commonly has *dessins* on its readers, and all the versions of *When the Wind Blows* are clearly intensely felt propaganda against the possession and deployment of nuclear weapons. The ire of Conservative politicians and those who have protested that Briggs is offering "comfort and help" to "the country's enemies" cannot be defused by ritualistically repeating that Briggs's efforts are "in no way intended as a political intervention". What brings *When the Wind Blows* into being, what gives it its passion, is that it is indeed a political intervention. If its various versions sober us about nuclear realities, so much the better for them. And better still, if they bring home to us the inevitability of the Orwellian liaison between all art and propaganda.

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Myth and manipulation

Lois Potter

JERZY LIMON
Dangerous Matter: English drama and politics in 1623/24
174pp. Cambridge University Press. £22.50.
0521 306647

The most recent books about the politics of Stuart drama have been those which explore a small area in detail. Martin Butler's *Theatre in Crisis* dealt with the ten years leading up to the Civil War; Jerzy Limon's short book focuses on only five texts, and on events which occupied a little more than a year. He also gives a useful month-by-month chronology (unfortunately marred by typographical errors). The period is that between the return of Prince Charles and the Duke of Buckingham from their unsuccessful marriage negotiations in Spain (October 1623) and the announcement of the Prince's betrothal to Henrietta Maria at the end of 1624. It was dominated both by anti-Spanish feeling and by the demand for English intervention on behalf of Frederick and Elizabeth of Bohemia, who was next in succession to the Prince and indisputably Protestant.

Of the plays performed in this hectic period, only one, Middleton's *A Game at Chess*, has received extensive attention from the political point of view. Limon argues, however, that Middleton was only one of many players in a larger game. Anti-Spanish and pro-Bohemian

sentiment was not a spontaneous popular reaction but the result of a "consciously contrived campaign, initiated and sponsored by a group of politicians whose goal it was to use all means available to win the support of both nobility and the commons". One such means was the theatre. Some of the plays most likely to have had explicit political intentions are now known only by title: of those which survive, some are known to have been censored before performance. Interpretation is thus not an easy matter. Limon, however, approaches his subject with the sophistication of a Pole used to the idea that all languages require decoding. He argues that political meaning is to be sought chiefly at the moments where other kinds of meaning—mythical, historical, allegorical—have broken down.

The close analysis which this approach requires is particularly effective with Jonson's unperformed masque, *Neptune's Triumph for the Return of Albion*, whose text, on its own, is about as intelligible as one end of a telephone conversation. It turns out that Jonson was simultaneously countering rumours about the Spanish journey, making a diplomatic flacco look like the fulfilment of the King's brilliant master-plan, and supporting the Prince's desire for a foreign policy more belligerent than his father's. For *The Duchess of Suffolk*, a popular rather than courtly play, Limon draws on his knowledge of Middle European history to show how it has been manipulated to equate the sufferings of Elizabeth of Bohemia with

those of the heroine from Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* and to provide historical backing for Frederick's claim to the throne of Bohemia.

On *A Game at Chess* he has no new evidence, and his analysis is directed less at specific caricatures like that of the Spanish ambassador than at the general identification of "the Black House" with universal evil. He also reserves judgment on the question of responsibility for the play's production. But, on this account, the views expressed by Middleton, although certainly in opposition to James's pacifist foreign policy, are not otherwise "oppositional" in the sense argued by Margot Heinemann in her influential study of this play. In fact, Thomas Cogswell has shown that Charles and Buckingham were, for a time, at one with popular feeling. National rejoicing followed news of the French alliance, even though it was accompanied by a relaxation of the laws against recusants. Limon does not offer any evidence of pro-French propaganda in the drama; it appears that the myth of Spain as the single national enemy temporarily carried all before it.

Massinger's *The Bondman*, and *The Sun's Darling* (attributed to Ford and Dekker) are more problematic works, topical only in parts. Massinger, Limon argues, revised his first act before publication in order to appeal to the newly assembled Parliament to vote subsidies for Mansfield, a general in the service of the exiled rulers of Bohemia, who was attempting to recruit an English force to fight on their

behalf. His argument is based partly on documentary evidence (the play was licensed twice) and partly on aesthetic grounds—the inconsistency between the first act and the rest.

The inconsistencies of *The Sun's Darling*, a mixture of morality and masque, are harder to explain. But Limon identifies an allusion to Frederick and Elizabeth in the Winter Kingdom of Act Five, alongside other lines usually taken to refer to the Scottish campaign of 1638–9, when the masque may have been revived for court performance. Limon refuses to speculate about revisions between 1623–4 and the work's first publication in 1636. I suspect, however, that the only reason why such a muddled text was thought worth printing at all was that it had indirectly acquired a third level of meaning; references to the sun and the court in the dedication and commendatory verses invite nostalgia for the monarchy. The possibility of reading the text subversively presumably outweighed, for royalist publishers and readers, the difficulty of making sense of it on any other terms.

As this example indicates, Limon is sometimes too reluctant to move outside his chosen period. He is also, perhaps, too apologetic about the fact that his texts are not "autonomous" works: is any text really autonomous? Nevertheless, his careful, small-scale analysis, coupled with his awareness of its critical implications, makes his book both useful and interesting reading.

Questions of repertoire

Katherine Duncan-Jones

COLIN GIBSON (Editor)
The Selected Plays of John Ford
356pp. Cambridge University Press. £30.
(paperback, £12.95).
0521 225434

MACD. P. JACKSON AND MICHAEL NEILL (Editors)
The Selected Plays of John Marston
536pp. Cambridge University Press. £37.50.
(paperback, £12.95).
0521 217466

JOAN WARTLING ROBERTS (Editor)
Sleely and Naples, or, The Fatal Union. A tragedy by S. Harding
134pp. New York: Garland. \$41.
08240 54601

Poetic riches, in these Cambridge University Press volumes of "Plays by Renaissance and Restoration dramatists", are confined in little room. The begetters of this series must envisage their oddly designed tomes—only 4½ inches wide—as slipping comfortably into the pockets or handbags of the "students at all levels" for whom the editions are primarily intended. The format has disadvantages, most notably the narrow margin limits, which result in a high proportion of run-on lines. The opening line of each speech, pushed forward by the character prefix, is almost invariably run on, and the proportion of run-on lines in long verse speeches can make for restless reading. Another disadvantage is that the books do not lie open easily without violent traction of the spine.

However, more integral features of these editions can be praised. The Marston selection is generous; and annotation and textual information are authoritative and compendious. Macd. P. Jackson and Michael Neill include the two *Antonio* plays, *The Malcontent*, and the stately and moving tragedy *Sophonisba*. The last named: Marston's attempt to emulate the Roman plays of Shakespeare and Jonson, was praised by Eliot for its "underlying serenity", and is unusual among the plays in these volumes in having been edited only once before in recent years, by W. Kemp in 1979. Least worthy of its place in the volume is *The Dutch Courtesan*, whose "damp critical reception" when it was revived at Chichester in 1964 seems unsurprising. Along with that of *The Malcontent*, the text of this play might be expected to suffer particularly from the "more thoroughgoing modernization than has been customary" promised by the editors in their preface, because of the proportion of col-

loquial or disordered language. However, a comparison of the Franceschina scenes in this text and in that of M. L. Wine (1964) suggests that her broken Dutch-English speeches have been identically rendered. Perhaps the still unedited but charming comedy *What you Will*, 1607, printed and published by the same duo as *Shakespeare's Sonnets* two years later, would have been a more adventurous choice.

There is a dispiriting tendency for successive editors of plays in this period to keep on re-editing texts already several times edited, while neglecting others. The Cambridge selection of Ford, by Colin Gibson, exemplifies this. It comprises *The Broken Heart* and *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, each of which has rated four separate editions since 1965; and *Perkin Warbeck*, which has had three. Even more direct competition is offered to it by Keith Sturgess's Penguin selection (1970, reprinted 1985), which contains the same three plays, though in a different order. Gibson's edition is distinctly more weighty than Sturgess's in terms of

annotation, critical and stage history, and textual information; but the potential student buyer (at any level) may not feel that the extra scholarly meat offered for £12.95 (Cambridge paperback) quite comes to six pounds more value than Penguin's £3.95. Here, even more than with Marston, a different repertoire of plays, or possibly even a combination of plays with poems, would make it more evident that something new was being offered. Ford is probably still under-appreciated, but repeated semi-popular editions of the same trio of plays may not be the best way of stimulating a vigorous revival of interest in his work among students.

New ground is certainly broken with Joan Warthling Roberts's edition of Samuel Harding's lively, derivative revenge tragedy *Sleely and Naples*, printed at Oxford in 1640, and apparently never acted. Harding was at Exeter, where Ford had been in the first years of the seventeenth century, and his play, with its heroine Calantha, has very strong echoes of

Ford, as well as weaker ones of Fletcher, Chapman, Kyd and others. The editor says that Ford "preceded Harding by more than ten years" at Oxford, but if the play's author is rightly identified as the Samuel Harding who was matriculated in April 1635, at nineteen, the gap was a much wider one. His play seems to have been a juvenile sport, for it appears that he spent a long subsequent life as a Norfolk clergyman without writing anything else.

There are rather more indications than one could wish that this edition is an unrevised doctoral thesis. Numerous slips, such as the omission of the name of Charintha from the Dramatis Personae, the spelling of "Kemble" as "Kemball", and frequent misspelling of Latin words and titles should not have been allowed to stand in the published text. The mislineation of the play's first three lines is not a promising beginning. A facsimile text with introduction and commentary might have been a better procedure for this postscript to the history of the revenge play in England.

Principals' principles

Julie Hankey

JOSEPH R. ROACH
The Player's Passion: Studies in the science of acting
255pp. Associated University Presses/
University of Delaware Press. £20.50.
0874132657

There is probably a secret relief among students of theatre history that they are quite safe from the performances of Betterton; Garrick et al, and need never have to decide whether their acting was any good—"good", that is, from our point of view. Were the sculptural poses, abrupt transitions and clapping "points" somehow inessential tricks, underneath which was some perennial quality, we would find familiar? Those "inessentials" were just what audiences cared about; what they so often called "natural". Do we then have to say that good acting is "better" now? For anyone who has hovered uncomfortably in front of this problem, *The Player's Passion* is a wonderful cure—a lesson in historical empathy.

What it demonstrates, with detailed learning, is that "convention" is physically determined. Actors specialise in making invisible emotions manifest—in turning their insides out. Depending on how those insides are seen—whether as suffused with the *ethos* or as mechanically hydraulic, for example—so, too, will the external spectacle appear and be

understood. The connection between theories of the passions and acting techniques has been noticed before by theatre historians, and the more obvious associated physiologies have sometimes been acknowledged. But the range, detail and insistence of this book are of a different order. Equally at home among psycho-physiological and theatrical treatises, Joseph Roach demonstrates that some of the most influential critics of the stage have used one kind of knowledge to illuminate the other. Either they were men of science themselves, or they turned to scientists. Diderot is the obvious example and the pivot of the book is a fascinating analysis of this subtle man, so hated by actors for denying their spontaneity and persistently urging them to be sincere. But John Bulwer and Edmund Gayton in the seventeenth century, Aaron Hill and John Hill in the eighteenth; G. H. Lewes, William Archer and Stanislavsky in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (to name only a few); all saw that acting raises in a pre-eminent degree the question of the relationship between mind and matter.

Roach freely grants that for the practitioners themselves, "inspiration" and "sincerity" have usually served as adequate if vague explanations. More to his purposes are the self-analytical actors who have made some articulate contribution to the debate—Garrick, Clarendon and Dumas, Talma and Stanislavsky. Yet he also leaves room for unwitting participants in the debate. A theme of the book, drawn from

Foucault, is that shifts of knowledge reset the mental categories in which more or less blind assumptions about the world and "nature" are made. Edmund Kean was no biologist, but his acting was of a piece with a concept of organic "life" that was only then coming into existence. What G. H. Lewes noticed about him at his best, was what he noticed about nervous tissue: the "fluctuating" play of movement, the finely graded and evolving transitions, the gradual subsiding after a discharge of energy, if Kean had acted a century earlier, within a Cartesian system, when the animal spirits were understood to swell and drain the muscles into predetermined shapes at the bidding of the soul, his fine gradations would have seemed a blurry and unnatural mess.

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Visions of the future

ix Gilbert

FRANCESCO CORDERO
Savonarola: Voce calamitosa 1452–1494
Rome: Laterza. L35,000.
2676X

Savonarola's life, and—perhaps even more—death at the stake, on May 23, 1498, has been a debate that has continued ever since; history has contributed the two great biographies of Josef Schnitzer and Roberto Ridolfi. Donald Weinstein's study of Savonarola in Florentine politics; these outstanding works of modern historical scholarship may seem to exhaust the subject. That yet another book on Savonarola can tell us much new would appear unlikely.

Francesco Cordero's *Savonarola: Voce calamitosa* makes an interesting addition. It ends when most of the other studies end, with Savonarola's participation in the Florentine embassy to King Charles VIII of France in 1494. It was then that the friar emerged as a Florentine political leader: his influence in the following four years have been the focus of the historical discussion. Attention has been focused on what determined Savonarola to assume an active role in the struggle against the Church of Rome. Was he, by ideas which anticipate those that, years later, led to the Reformation? Or was he motivated by indignation about the corrupting influence of the Borgia Pope, the same time wishing to be and to remain a loyal son of the Church? Were the prophecies in which he prophesied that Florence would have a leading role in bringing reform and ushering in the millennium, and expressions of a deeply rooted faith?

Cordero provides a detailed description of Savonarola's intellectual development in the years before 1494. The book contains lengthy quotations from the original texts of various sermons, diaries and treatises that Savonarola composed in the years of his training— a period which includes his entry into the Dominican order and his work as a member of the order in Ferrara, San Gimignano and Brescia, until he

joined the Dominicans in Florence and became Prior of San Marco. Quoting the original texts of these documents leads to a frequent change in language: shifts between modern Italian, Renaissance Italian and Latin make the book difficult to read. Moreover, presentation of the texts is often interspersed with Cordero's investigations, and his exploration of many of the miraculous stories that Savonarola's followers and adherents wove around the life of their "saint".

Nevertheless, the picture that emerges throws some new light on Savonarola's personality. He appears not to have been very "simpatico"; on the death of his father he wrote his mother an almost cruel letter, entirely lacking in affection. He seems distant from common human interests and feelings, believing that to strive for spiritual salvation, particularly at a time when the end of the world was approaching, is the only worthwhile concern of man. That the Last Judgment was imminent was a widely held belief at that time and, reinforced by an obsessive concern with spiritual salvation, it gave Savonarola's sermons an ominous tone; he was, as the title of Cordero's book indicates, indeed a "voce calamitosa".

Before 1494, however, the sermons are hardly more than the unusually strong admonitions of a preacher of repentance. They contain no reference to a special role for Florence or Italy in the coming crisis. Savonarola shows no particular interest in questions of social order or political organization. He rails against the luxury of the wealthy, but has no hesitation in associating with the Bentivogli or the Medici when their support is useful for his causes. He changed his attitude, though, when the French under Charles VIII appeared in Tuscany and his prophecies of imminent catastrophe seemed to have come true. To the Florentines he appeared now to be divinely inspired, and Savonarola himself became convinced that he was a true prophet. Claiming that he could foresee the future course of events he was drawn into trying to direct them. He became first the ally and then the instrument of Florentine political parties and leaders. His sermons in San Marco in the last months before his fall left in one sceptical spectator, Niccolò Machiavelli, the impression that "by adjusting to the changes of times, he makes his lies plausible".

in all their houses

Henderson

CARMICHAEL
The Poor in Renaissance Florence
Cambridge University Press. £22.50.
338

Carmichael's book has two principal aims: to study epidemic disease in Florence for the 150 years following the Black Death, and to examine the measures adopted by the Florentine State to cope with plagues. The sources used in the first part of the book are the city's two burial registers, or *Libri*, kept by the Grascia, or grain-officers of the Guild of Physicians and Apothecaries. Carmichael is not the first to have examined these Books of the Dead; they have been examined in detail by David and Christiane Klapisch-Zuber in their 1978 study of the 1427 Catasto; but she takes further the analysis of one of their unusual features: the listing of causes of death for each epidemic year between 1424 and 1498. This enables her to look at plague in the context of other epidemic and infectious diseases. Indeed, one of the most contributions of the book is the discussion of illnesses, such as *usticia* or dysentery. There is also an interesting discussion of the "minor plague" of 1430 in the context of S. Spirito and its clustering within the walls of the city, Borgo Toleglio. But Carmichael, by restricting herself to one of the most serious areas of the city, Carmichael confirms her own claim, that there was a relationship between disease and poverty in the latter-day crusades of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, its survival during the Renaissance and its establishment as a Court Order when the monarchy of the House of

well. She could also have given her work a more solid foundation if she had studied these records with reference to the Catasto, a source which lists the assets of every household living in Florence in 1427.

The relationship between disease and poverty is presented here as a key to understanding the development of official policy during epidemics. Carmichael argues that governments' increased awareness of contagion, with the recognition that those worst affected by disease were usually the poor, led to the emergence of plague controls, and in particular the establishment of a Lazaretto or isolation hospital. However, it is worth asking whether the Lazaretto had more than a symbolic importance in Florence, considering that its capacity when it finally opened in 1479 was only twenty-six beds. In this and other cases our understanding of government measures would have been increased greatly if the author had examined the plight of the poor during these years within the context of the services provided by other charitable institutions in the city. Furthermore, if she is going to argue that the "growing burden of urban poverty" was one reason why plague controls emerged, then surely she should have considered more fully the evidence for the fall in the standard of living and its relationship to the city's increasing population in this period.

Desmond Seward, in his *Italy's Knights of St George: The Constantinian Order* (139pp. Gerald's Cross; Colln Smythe. £12. 0 905715 28 4), traces the Order's history from its origins in the twelfth century, through its involvement in the latter-day crusades of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, its survival during the Renaissance and its establishment as a Court Order when the monarchy of the House of

Workers unite

Paul Ginsborg

FRANK M. SNOWDEN
Violence and Great Estates in the South of Italy: Apulia, 1900–1922
245pp. Cambridge University Press. £25.
0521 307317

The *biennio rosso*, the two "red years" of workers' militancy in Italy after the First World War, has been the object of considerable recent attention on the part of British and American scholars. Nearly all of them, however, have been concerned with the north of the country, with the Factory Council movement, and above all with Antonio Gramsci. This over-concentration on one man and one region has not helped in attempts to establish the depth of the Italian crisis at that time, nor has it helped to evaluate what possibilities really existed for radical change. Gramsci himself, as is well known, maintained that the Italian revolution would never occur unless northern workers and southern peasantry combined; as he wrote in August 1919, the cities had to be "welded to the countryside". However, there is little on record in Italian and nothing in English about the attitudes of the southern rural population, so it is hard to decide whether Gramsci's proposed alliance was feasible.

Frank Snowden's fine study of the Apulian landless labourers goes a long way towards providing the necessary information for at least one region of the South. His early chapters build up a convincing and well-documented picture of agrarian life in south-east Italy. The terrible deprivations of the landless labourers and their families, both at work in the fields of the *Tavoliere* and at home in centres like Cerignola, are described eloquently and skillfully, without sentimentality or exaggeration. Out of these conditions came the strongest rural anarcho-sindicalist movement in Italy, which between 1919 and 1921 culminated in what Snowden calls "an insurrectionary up-

surge". He is excellent on the activities of the anarcho-sindicalist leagues and chambers of labour. Direct action was, as he writes, "relatively easy to conduct in the teeming agro-cities where a single man with a trumpet sufficed to call the workers into the streets". By 1919 the league at Cerignola had 18,000 members, with virtually every adult labourer in its ranks. The prefect reported that "the organization of the working-class is perfect". The unity of the proletariat, that most elusive of all revolutionary categories, had come close to being realized at a local level.

Good though Snowden's account is, it could have been better still. Although a great deal has been written in Italian on the leading anarcho-sindicalist of Cerignola, Giuseppe Di Vittorio, he emerges here only as a shadowy figure. There is a reference to the oratorical power of the anarchist feminist Maria Rygiel, but no information about her or extracts from her speeches. The anarcho-sindicalists are under-characterized, and not enough is made of their attempts to provide an alternative culture.

The least satisfactory section of *Violence and Great Estates in the South of Italy* is the last. Inexplicably, the chapter on the First World War and its effects is only seven pages long. By contrast, the section on the years 1919–21 makes compulsive reading, but Snowden tends to duck the major questions posed by his study. There is no attempt to compare Apulia to other regions of southern Italy, nor is there any proper explanation of the various reasons, both structural and subjective, which prevented the sort of worker-peasant co-operation on a national scale envisaged by Gramsci. It is as if the very isolation of the Apulian anarcho-sindicalists had communicated itself to their historian, and stopped him from confronting the wider political and historical problems of the post-war crisis. It is also sad to have to note that such an excellent monograph lacks a satisfactory scholarly apparatus. There are some striking photographs in the text, but no bibliography, and a quite inadequate index.

THE TIMES



Burgess bares his soul

Born Jack Wilson in Manchester between the wars, Anthony Burgess, in his autobiographical confessions, tells of his childhood; precocious sex; Roman Catholic conscience; wartime service; and exile in the Far East, where he began his novels. On *The Times* Books Page next Thursday Peter Ackroyd reviews *Little Wilson and Big God*

... and regularly in *The Times*, Bernard Levin (right) on the way we live now, Kenneth Fleet on finance, Irving Wardle on the theatre, Frances Gibb on the law, Paul Griffiths on music, Shona Crawford Poole on travel, Clifford Longley on the Church, Philip Howard on words, David Robinson on the cinema ... and much more to read each week

THE TIMES

The world's most famous newspaper. (25p)

Myth and manipulation

Lois Potter

JERZY LIMON
Dangerous Matter: English drama and politics
in 1623/24
174pp. Cambridge University Press. £22.50.
0521306647

The best recent books about the politics of Stuart drama have been those which explore a small area in detail. Martin Butler's *Theatre in Crisis* dealt with the ten years leading up to the Civil War; Jerzy Limon's short book focuses on only five texts, and on events which occupied a little more than a year. He also gives a useful month-by-month chronology (unfortunately marred by typographical errors). The period is that between the return of Prince Charles and the Duke of Buckingham from their unsuccessful marriage negotiations in Spain (October 1623) and the announcement of the Prince's betrothal to Henrietta Maria at the end of 1624. It was dominated both by anti-Spanish feeling and by the demand for English intervention on behalf of Frederick and Elizabeth of Bohemia, who was next in succession to the Prince and indisputably Protestant.

Of the plays performed in this hectic period, only one, Middleton's *A Game at Chess*, has received extensive attention from the political point of view. Limon argues, however, that Middleton was only one of many players in a larger game. Anti-Spanish and pro-Bohemian

sentiment was not a spontaneous popular reaction but the result of a "consciously contrived campaign, initiated and sponsored by a group of politicians whose goal it was to use all means available to win the support of both nobility and the commons". One such means was the theatre. Some of the plays most likely to have had explicit political intentions are now known only by title; of those which survive, some are known to have been censored before performance. Interpretation is thus not an easy matter. Limon, however, approaches his subject with the sophistication of a Pole used to the idea that all languages require decoding. He argues that political meaning is to be sought chiefly at the moments where other kinds of meaning—mythical, historical, allegorical—have broken down.

The close analysis which this approach requires is particularly effective with Jonson's unperformed masque, *Nepwme's Triumph for the Return of Albion*, whose text, on its own, is about as intelligible as one end of a telephone conversation. It turns out that Jonson was simultaneously countering rumours about the Spanish journey, making a diplomatic fiasco look like the fulfilment of the King's brilliant master-plan, and supporting the Prince's desire for a foreign policy more belligerent than his father's. For *The Duchess of Suffolk*, a popular rather than courtly play, Limon draws on his knowledge of Middle European history to show how it has been manipulated to equate the sufferings of Elizabeth of Bohemia with

those of the heroine from Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* and to provide historical backing for Frederick's claim to the throne of Bohemia.

On *A Game at Chess* he has no new evidence, and his analysis is directed less at specific caricatures like that of the Spanish ambassador than at the general identification of "the Black House" with universal evil. He also reserves judgment on the question of responsibility for the play's production. But, on this account, the views expressed by Middleton, although certainly in opposition to James's pacifist foreign policy, are not otherwise "oppositional" in the sense argued by Margot Heinemann in her influential study of this play. In fact, Thomas Cogswell has shown that Charles and Buckingham were, for a time, at one with popular feeling. National rejoicing followed news of the French alliance, even though it was accompanied by a relaxation of the laws against recusants. Limon does not offer any evidence of pro-French propaganda in the drama; it appears that the myth of Spain as the single national enemy temporarily carried all before it.

Massinger's *The Bondman*, and *The Sun's Darling* (attributed to Ford and Dekker) are more problematic works, topical only in parts. Massinger, Limon argues, revised his first act before publication in order to appeal to the newly assembled Parliament to vote subsidies for Mansfield, a general in the service of the exiled rulers of Bohemia, who was attempting to recruit an English force to fight on their

behalf. His argument is based partly on documentary evidence (the play was licensed twice) and partly on aesthetic grounds—the inconsistency between the first act and the rest.

The inconsistencies of *The Sun's Darling*, a mixture of morality and masque, are harder to explain, but Limon identifies an allusion to Frederick and Elizabeth in the Winter Kingdom of Act Five, alongside other lines usually taken to refer to the Scottish campaign of 1638–9, when the masque may have been revived for court performance. Limon refuses to speculate about revisions between 1623–4 and the work's first publication in 1656. I suspect, however, that the only reason why such a muddled text was thought worth printing at all was that it had indirectly acquired a third level of meaning: references to the sun and the court in the dedication and commendatory verses invite nostalgia for the monarchy. The possibility of reading the text subversively presumably outweighed, for royalist publishers and readers, the difficulty of making sense of it on any other terms.

As this example indicates, Limon is sometimes too reluctant to move outside his chosen period. He is also, perhaps, too apologetic about the fact that his texts are not "autonomous" works: is any text really autonomous? Nevertheless, his careful, small-scale analysis, coupled with his awareness of its critical implications, makes his book both useful and interesting reading.

Questions of repertoire

Katherine Duncan-Jones

COLIN GIBSON (Editor)
The Selected Plays of John Ford
356pp. Cambridge University Press. £30
(paperback, £12.95).
0521225434

MACD. P. JACKSON AND MICHAEL NEILL (Editors)
The Selected Plays of John Marston
536pp. Cambridge University Press. £37.50
(paperback, £12.95).
0521217466

JOAN WARTLING ROBERTS (Editor)
Sicily and Naples, or, The Fatal Union. A
tragedy by S. Harding.
134pp. New York: Garland. \$41.
0824034601

Poetic riches, in these Cambridge University Press volumes of "Plays by Renaissance and Restoration dramatists", are confined in little room. The begetters of this series must envisage their oddly designed tomes—only 4½ inches wide—as slipping comfortably into the pockets or handbags of the "students at all levels" for whom the editions are primarily intended. The format has disadvantages, most notably the narrow margin limits, which result in a high proportion of run-on lines. The opening line of each speech, pushed forward by the character prefix, is almost invariably run on, and the proportion of run-on lines in long verse speeches can make for restless reading. Another disadvantage is that the books do not lie open easily without violent traction of the spine.

However, more integral features of these editions can be praised. The Marston selection is generous, and annotation and textual information are authoritative and compendious. Macd. P. Jackson and Michael Neill include the two *Antonio* plays, *The Malcontent*, and the stately and moving tragedy *Sophonisba*. The last named, Marston's attempt to emulate the Roman plays of Shakespeare and Jonson, was praised by Eliot for its "underlying serenity", and is unusual among the plays in these volumes in having been edited only once before in recent years, by W. Kemp in 1979. Least worthy of its place in the volume is *The Dutch Courtesan*, whose "damp critical reception" when it was revived at Chichester in 1964 seems unsurprising. Along with that of *The Malcontent*, the text of this play might be expected to suffer particularly from the "more thorough-going modernization than has been customary", promised by the editors in their preface, because of the proportion of col-

loquial or disordered language. However, a comparison of the Franceschina scenes in this text and in that of M. L. Wine (1964) suggests that her broken Dutch-English speeches have been identically rendered. Perhaps the still unedited but charming comedy *What You Will*, 1607, printed and published by the same duo as *Shakespeare's Sonnets* two years later, would have been a more adventurous choice.

There is a dispiriting tendency for successive editors of plays in this period to keep on re-editing texts already several times edited, while neglecting others. The Cambridge selection of Ford, by Colin Gibson, exemplifies this. It comprises *The Broken Heart* and *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, each of which has rather few separate editions since 1965; and *Perkin Warbeck*, which has had three. Even more direct competition is offered to it by Keith Sturgess's Penguin selection (1970, reprinted 1985), which contains the same three plays, though in a different order. Gibson's edition is distinctly more weighty than Sturgess's in terms of

annotation, critical and stage history, and textual information; but the potential student buyer (at any level) may not feel that the extra scholarly meat offered for £12.95 (Cambridge paperback) quite comes to six pounds more value than Penguin's £3.95. Here, even more than with Marston, a different repertoire of plays, or possibly even a combination of plays with poems, would make it more evident that something new was being offered. Ford is probably still under-appreciated, but repeated semi-popular editions of the same trio of plays may not be the best way of stimulating a vigorous revival of interest in his work among students.

New ground is certainly broken with Joan Warthling Roberts's edition of Samuel Harding's lively, derivative revenge tragedy *Sicily and Naples*, printed at Oxford in 1640, and apparently never acted. Harding was at Exeter, where Ford had been in the first years of the seventeenth century, and his play, with its heroine Calantha, has very strong echoes of

Ford, as well as weaker ones of Fletcher, Chapman, Kyd and others. The editor says that Ford "preceded Harding by more than ten years" at Oxford, but if the play's author is rightly identified as the Samuel Harding who was matriculated in April 1635, *aet* nineteen, the gap was a much wider one. His play seems to have been a juvenile sport, for it appears that he spent a long subsequent life as a Norfolk clergyman without writing anything else.

There are rather more indications than one could wish that this edition is an unrevised doctoral thesis. Numerous slips, such as the omission of the name of Charintha from the Dramatis Personae, the spelling of "Kemle" as "Kemball", and frequent misspelling of Latin words and titles should not have been allowed to stand in the published text. The mislineation of the play's first three lines is not a promising beginning. A facsimile text with introduction and commentary might have been a better procedure for this postscript to the history of the revenge play in England.

Principals' principles

Julie Hankey

JOSEPH R. ROACH
The Player's Passion: Studies in the science of acting
255pp. Associated University Presses/
University of Delaware Press. £20.50.
0874132657

There is probably a secret relief among students of theatre history that they are quite safe from the performances of Betterton; Garrick *et al*, and need never have to decide whether their acting was any good—"good", that is, from our point of view. Were the sculptural poses, abrupt transitions and clapping "points" somehow insensational tricks; underneath which was some perennial quality we would find familiar? Those "insensentials" were just what audiences cared about, what they so often called "natural". Do we then have to say that good acting is "better" now? For anyone who has hovered uncomfortably in front of this problem, *The Player's Passion* is a wonderful cure—a lesson in historical empathy.

What it demonstrates, with detailed learning, is that "convention" is physically determined. Actors specialize in making invisible emotions manifest. In turning their insides out. Depending on how those insides are seen—whether as suffused with the vital *pneuma* or as mechanistically hydraulic, for example—so, too, will the external spectacle appear and be

understood. The connection between theories of the passions and acting techniques has been noticed before by theatre historians, and the more obvious associated physiologies have sometimes been acknowledged. But the range, detail and insistence of this book are of a different order. Equally at home among psycho-physiological and theatrical treatises, Joseph Roach demonstrates that some of the most influential critics of the stage have used one kind of knowledge to illuminate the other. Either they were men of science themselves, or they turned to scientists. Diderot is the obvious example and the pivot of the book is a fascinating analysis of this subtle man; so hated by actors for denying their spontaneity and perversely urging them to be insincere. But John Bulwer and Edmund Gwynn in the seventeenth century, Aaron Hill and John Hill in the eighteenth; G. H. Lewes, William Archer and Stanislavsky in the nineteenth; and twentieth centuries (to name only a few), all saw that acting raises in a pre-emptive degree the question of the relationship between mind and matter.

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sions of the future

Gilbert

JO CORDEIRO
Savonarola: Voce calamitosa 1452–1494
Rome: Laterza. L35,000.
076X

Savonarola's life, and—perhaps even more—death at the stake, on May 23, 1498, has been a debate that has continued ever since; history has contributed the two great biographies of Josef Schmitzer and Roberto Ridolfi; Donald Weinstein's study of Savonarola in Florentine politics; these outstanding works of modern historical scholarship may seem to exhaust the subject. That yet another book on Savonarola can tell us much new would appear unlikely.

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Cordeiro provides a detailed description of Savonarola's intellectual development in the years before 1494. The book contains lengthy quotations from the original texts of various sermons, diaries and treatises that Savonarola composed in the years of his training studies—a period which includes his entry to the Dominican order and his time as a member of the order in Ferrara, Bologna, San Gimignano and Brescia, until he

joined the Dominicans in Florence and became Prior of San Marco. Quoting the original texts of these documents leads to a frequent change in language: shifts between modern Italian, Renaissance Italian and Latin make the book difficult to read. Moreover, presentation of the texts is often interspersed with Cordeiro's investigations, and his exploration of many of the miraculous stories that Savonarola's followers and adherents wrote about the life of their "saint".

Nevertheless, the picture that emerges throws some new light on Savonarola's personality. He appears not to have been very "simpatico"; on the death of his father he wrote his mother an almost cruel letter, entirely lacking in affection. He seems distant from common human interests and feelings, believing that to strive for spiritual salvation, particularly at a time when the end of the world was approaching, is the only worthwhile concern of man. That the Last Judgment was imminent was a widely held belief at that time and, reinforced by an obsessive concern with spiritual salvation, it gave Savonarola's sermons an ominous tone; he was, as the title of Cordeiro's book indicates, indeed a "voce calamitosa".

Before 1494, however, the sermons are hardly more than the unusually strong admonitions of a preacher of repentance. They contain no reference to a special role for Florence or Italy in the coming crisis. Savonarola shows no particular interest in questions of social order or political organization. He rails against the luxury of the wealthy, but has no hesitation in associating with the Bentivogli or the Medici when their support is useful for his causes. He changed his attitude, though, when the French under Charles VIII appeared in Tuscany and his prophecies of imminent catastrophe seemed to have come true. To the Florentines he appeared now to be divinely inspired, and Savonarola himself became convinced that he was a true prophet. Claiming that he could foresee the future course of events he was drawn into trying to direct them. He became first the ally and then the instrument of Florentine political parties and leaders. His sermons in San Marco in the last months before his fall left in one sceptical spectator, Niccolò Machiavelli, the impression that "by adjusting to the changes of times, he makes his lies plausible".

in all their houses

John Henderson

CARMICHAEL
Disease and The Poor in Renaissance Florence
Cambridge University Press. £22.50.
052130338

Carmichael's book has two principal aims: to study epidemic disease in Florence in the 150 years following the Black Death of 1348, and to examine the measures adopted by the Florentine State to cope with plague. The main sources used in the first part of the book are the city's two burial registers, or *Libri Morti*, kept by the Grascia, or grain office, and the Guild of Physicians and Apothecaries.

Carmichael is not the first to have examined these Books of the Dead; they have been examined in detail by David E. R. Wood and Christiane Klapisch-Zuber in their study of the 1427 Catasto (1978); but she takes what further the analysis of one of their unusual features: the listing of causes of death during each epidemic year between 1424 and 1458. This enables her to look at plague in the context of other epidemic and endemic diseases. Indeed, one of the most convincing sections of the book is the discussion of childhood illnesses, such as *scotch* or dysentery.

There is also an interesting discussion of the "minor plague" of 1430 in the context of S. Spirito and its clustering within households in one street, Borgo Togliolo. But unfortunately, by restricting herself to one of the poorest areas of the city, Carmichael only confirms her own claim, that there was no relationship between disease and poverty. She has extended the analysis to the *Uffizi* and the *Giovanni*, for example, the world of the more affluent neighbourhoods as

well. She could also have given her work a more solid foundation if she had studied these records with reference to the Catasto, a source which lists the assets of every household living in Florence in 1427.

The relationship between disease and poverty is presented here as a key to understanding the development of official policy during epidemics. Carmichael argues that governments' increased awareness of contagion, with the recognition that those worst affected by disease were usually the poor, led to the emergence of plague controls, and in particular the establishment of a Lazaretto or isolation hospital. However, it is worth asking whether the Lazaretto had more than a symbolic importance in Florence, considering that its capacity when it finally opened in 1479 was only twenty-six beds. In this and other cases our understanding of government measures would have been increased greatly if the author had examined the plight of the poor during these years within the context of the services provided by other charitable institutions in the city. Furthermore, if she is going to argue that the "growing burden of urban poverty" was one reason why plague controls emerged, then surely she should have considered more fully the evidence for the fall in the standard of living and its relationship to the city's increasing population in this period.

Desmond Seward, in his *Italy's Knights of St George: The Constantinian Order* (1939pp. Gerald's Cross: Colin Smythe. £12. 0 905715 28 4), traces the Order's history from its origins in the twelfth century, through its involvement in the latter-day crusades of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, its survival during the Risorgimento and its establishment as a Court Order under the papacy of Pius XII. The

Workers unite

Paul Ginsborg

FRANK M. SNOWDEN
Violence and Great Estates in the South of Italy:
Apulia, 1900–1922
245pp. Cambridge University Press. £25.
0521307317

The *biennio rosso*, the two "red years" of workers' militancy in Italy after the First World War, has been the object of considerable recent attention on the part of British and American scholars. Nearly all of them, however, have been concerned with the north of the country, with the Factory Council movement, and above all with Antonio Gramsci. This over-concentration on one man and one region has not helped in attempts to establish the depth of the Italian crisis at that time, nor has it helped to evaluate what possibilities really existed for radical change. Gramsci himself, as is well known, maintained that the Italian revolution would never occur unless northern workers and southern peasantry combined; as he wrote in August 1919, the cities had to be "welded to the countryside". However, there is little on record in Italian and nothing in English about the attitudes of the southern rural population, so it is hard to decide whether Gramsci's proposed alliance was feasible.

Frank Snowden's fine study of the Apulian landless labourers goes a long way towards providing the necessary information for at least one region of the South. His early chapters build up a convincing and well-documented picture of agrarian life in south-east Italy. The terrible deprivations of the landless labourers and their families, both at work in the fields of the *Tavoliere* and at home in centres like Cerignola, are described eloquently and skillfully, without sentimentality or exaggeration. Out of these conditions came the strongest rural anarcho-syndicalist movement in Italy, which between 1919 and 1921 culminated in what Snowden calls "an insurrectionary up-

surge". He is excellent on the activities of the anarcho-syndicalist leagues and chambers of labour. Direct action was, as he writes, "relatively easy to conduct in the teeming agro-cities where a single man with a trumpet sufficed to call the workers into the streets". By 1919 the league at Cerignola had 18,000 members, with virtually every adult labourer in its ranks. The prefect reported that "the organization of the working-class is perfect". The unity of the proletariat, that most elusive of all revolutionary categories, had come close to being realized at a local level.

Good though Snowden's account is, it could have been better still. Although a great deal has been written in Italian on the leading anarcho-syndicalist of Cerignola, Giuseppe Di Vittorio, he emerges here only as a shadowy figure. There is a reference to the oratorical power of the anarchist feminist Maria Ryglar, but no information about her or extracts from her speeches. The anarcho-syndicalists are under-characterized, and not enough is made of their attempts to provide an alternative culture.

The least satisfactory section of *Violence and Great Estates in the South of Italy* is the last. Inexplicably, the chapter on the First World War and its effects is only seven pages long. By contrast, the section on the years 1919–21 makes compulsive reading, but Snowden tends to duck the major questions posed by his study. There is no attempt to compare Apulia to other regions of southern Italy, nor is there any proper explanation of the various reasons, both structural and subjective, which prevented the sort of worker-peasant co-operation on a national scale envisaged by Gramsci.

It is as if the very isolation of the Apulian anarcho-syndicalists had communicated itself to their historian, and stopped him from confronting the wider political and historical problems of the post-war crisis. It is also sad to have to note that such an excellent monograph lacks a satisfactory scholarly apparatus. There are some striking photographs in the text, but no bibliography, and a quite inadequate index.

THE TIMES



Burgess bares his soul

Born Jack Wilson in Manchester between the wars, Anthony Burgess, in his autobiographical confessions, tells of his childhood; precocious sex; Roman Catholic conscience; wartime service; and exile in the Far East, where he began his novels. On *The Times* Books Page next Thursday Peter Ackroyd reviews Little Wilson and Big God



... and regularly in *The Times*, Bernard Levin (right) on the way we live now, Kenneth Fleet on finance, Irving Wardle on the theatre, Frances Gibb on the law, Paul Griffiths on music, Shona Crawford Poole on travel, Clifford Longley on the Church, Philip Howard on words, David Robinson on the cinema and much more to read each week

THE TIMES

The world's most famous newspaper. 25p

Colonial dilemmas

Kenneth Ingham

BILL GUEST and JOHN M. SELLERS (Editors)
Enterprise and Exploitation in a Victorian
Colony: Aspects of the economic and social
history of colonial Natal

376pp. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal
Press; distributed in the UK by Southemour
Books, Tyre Brook House, Sandford St
Martin, Oxon OX5 4AH. R25.50.

08098014693

KARLA POEWE

The Namibian Herero: A history of their
psychological integration and survival
364pp. Lewiston, NY, and Queenston,
Ontario: Edwin Mellen Press. \$24.95.

0889461759

The collection of essays edited by Bill Guest and John M. Sellers has something of a period flavour, and is none the worse for it. Restrained in literary style and unpretentious in their historical claims, the contributors nevertheless produce a revealing portrait of the objectives of European settlers in part of southern Africa, and of their impact upon the land they had chosen as the scene of their activities. At the same time, *Enterprise and Exploitation in a Victorian Colony* reveals all too clearly the roots of present-day uncertainty and dissatisfaction in South Africa. Natal may not have been as important in the nineteenth century as its neighbours, Cape Colony or the Transvaal, but its history reflects the problems of the whole region.

True to Victorian priorities the book begins with the settlers themselves and with the contemporary preoccupation with technological innovation, particularly in the realm of communications – which, it should be said, were

aimed less at uniting the different parts of the colony than at maintaining links with the outside world. The nineteenth-century colonists were mainly British settlers. They had no intention of following the pattern of their western neighbours, the Boers, and becoming just another, albeit superior, African tribe. So they had to have a harbour. And with the harbour they had to have a railway, plunging far into the interior – so far, in fact, that it quickly became dedicated to supplying the needs of the Transvaal gold-mines, leaving the Natal colonists to fend for themselves. At the end of the century one Natalian industry did, however, establish a symbiotic relationship with the railway. The coal-mines of the north-west supplied the energy needs of the railroad, which in turn provided the line for the mines.

Meanwhile, the settlers had to make a living. Sellers explains how sheep-raising developed in the middle of the century with the benefit of expertise from Australia and of intelligent legislation to prevent the spread of disease among the animals. The government showed less detachment in promoting the interests of the sugar industry which grew up along the coast. Reorganized after a crisis in the 1860s, the industry benefited enormously from favourable tariffs, low wages and the importation of indentured labourers from India. This was only one of many instances of intervention by a government which, like the settlers themselves, was firmly convinced that the interests of the whites alone were deserving of support.

Moving gradually away from its settler focus, the book then has two interesting chapters about Indians in Natal. After completing their contracts in the sugar plantations, some of the indentured labourers took up small-scale trading or peasant farming, or worked on the railway. Their humble prosperity was soon

threatened by a tax which forced them back to the plantations and by the arrival of wealthier Indians who seized upon the commercial opportunities offered by the colony. The success of the latter, too, was challenged, this time by envious white settlers, and this, Surendra Bhana argues, forced the Indians to become involved in politics to try, with only limited success, to defend their interests.

It was, however, upon the black population that the settlers had the greatest impact, though not always in the manner in which orthodox radical historiography would have us believe. Peter Colenbrander, for example, shows that the ruler of the neighbouring Zulu kingdom was, if anything, strengthened rather than weakened in relation to his chiefs by contact with European traders, because he controlled the importation of arms. Norman Etherington describes how some Africans became successful peasant farmers under the guidance of Christian missionaries, only to have their further progress ruthlessly curtailed by restrictions upon the availability of land, imposed in the interests of the white farmers. After the achievement of responsible government in the 1890s, John Lambert claims, the position of African farmers became even worse. This was in part due to the increase in the African population. But it was the legislation enacted by a pro-settler parliament which finally destroyed African hopes for self-sufficiency in the production of food. From such an account, restrained though it may be, the roots of South Africa's present torment may readily be discovered. This is a book which makes its point effectively, without overemphasis and without polemic.

Restraint is not the word to describe the style of Karla Poewe, whose syntax might normally be found in an avant-garde novel. But the style

is intended to convey both a sense of the disintegration of the Herero people of South-West Africa and the urgency of their plight.

Professor Poewe is a social scientist whose knowledge of anthropology and psychology is sharpened in this instance by her own experiences as a child in post-Second World War Germany. She sees close resemblances between the German character and that of the Herero, and it is, for her, ironic that the current predicament of the Herero originates in their defeat by German colonists in 1904. For the Herero, however, there was no Marshall Aid; only continuing subordination to an occupying force, first German and then (also) South African. Attempts to escape from their plight – by political means, through education and by trying to rekindle the flame of traditional culture – were all fruitless. The result, says Poewe, is that the Herero live on two levels: one of rage against their situation, wherein might still lie some hope of escape, the other of acquiescence and despair. The problem is compounded by the fact that a similar duality existed in pre-colonial times, when the Herero were already profoundly concerned with status – with how to achieve it and how to preserve it among themselves. They were, even then, ready to accept subordination, but this was counterbalanced by envy of those who were more successful. The present situation, the author says, is more serious because to that inherent tendency to exist on two levels is added the fact of overwhelming white supremacy, which makes the rage of the Herero only the more multifaceted and destructive. In such a situation hope has no place, unless outside help is forthcoming. It is a compelling, and moving, thesis on a problem which, regrettably, seems to have only a tangential relationship to the political arguments which rage over Namibia.

Ethiopian networks

Darrell Bates

CHRIS PROUTY

Empress Taytu and Menelik II: Ethiopia 1883-1910
409pp. Raven Educational and Development
Services, 27 Old Gloucester Street, London
WC1N 3XX. Paperback, £9.95.
0932415113

Amharic, with thirty-one consonants and seven vowels, offers scope for differences in transliteration: Chris Prouty, the meticulous author of *Empress Taytu and Menelik II: Ethiopia 1883-1910*, uses a system which may surprise those accustomed to older spellings like Adowa, Magdala, Menelik and Shon, where she has Adwa, Meadela, Menilek and Shewa. The focus of this comprehensive study, however, as the title and the period which it covers indicate, is not Menilek of Shewa, but his consort Taytu. It was in 1883 that Taytu married Menilek, when they were both middle-aged, five years before he became Emperor; and it was in 1910 that she was deposed from the regency she had held while her husband was in mental and physical decline. Ms Prouty's purpose is to use contemporary Ethiopian and European sources to support her thesis that because of Taytu's strong and persuasive personality this crucial period of Ethiopian history should be known as the age jointly of Menilek and Taytu.

The author's interest in Ethiopia dates from before the revolution of 1974 when her husband was with the United States Information Service in Addis Ababa, and her book is dedicated to all the Ethiopian women "who are in prison or struggling in the prison of poverty" under the present régime. She has used these sympathies and her zest for research to present a particularly frank and vivid picture of the conditions in which women of Taytu's time lived and of the opportunities they afforded for a woman of her character and spirit to influence the men who directed the country's domestic and external affairs.

While it was Menilek who allowed the Italians to establish themselves in Massawa and Eritrea in the hope of curbing the ambitions of his distant domestic rivals in Tigrai, it was Taytu, with her extensive network of carefully

placed relations and friends (and her ubiquitous red umbrella), who continually urged him to call a halt and bring the acquisitive Italians to battle at Amba Alage and Adwa. Where the enquiring and practical Menilek was attracted by almost everything the West had to offer in mechanical and medical equipment, it was his consort, with her not ill-founded suspicion of foreigners and their motives, who became the more adept in playing one against the other and in ensuring that these inducements did not undermine Ethiopia's political or religious independence. Menilek and his court were thus able to deal in turn, and often simultaneously, with the Italians, French, British, Russians, Egyptians and Sudanese with advantage and impunity. In the end it was the imperial Russians, with their excellent hospitals and their religious affinities, who came to be regarded as the least demanding and the most welcome.

The author has delved deeply and widely into original sources to extract clear and vivid pictures of both Menilek and Taytu, and of the bizarre blend of biblical and medieval conditions still prevailing in many parts of their dominions. Particularly valuable are the recollections of Antonelli, Bulatovich, Ilg, Leontiev, Vollbrecht and Nellie Pense; and particularly germane are the accounts of the famine which carried off one-third of the population between 1888 and 1892. Then as now, it seems, the famine owed as much to man as to nature.

This scholarly and pleasingly written treatise is perhaps too detailed and diffuse to appeal to the general reader, but it is a study which no library or student of Ethiopian affairs should be without.

Africa: Problems in the transition to socialism (220pp. Zed Books. £18.95; paperback, £6.95. 0 86232 427 0), edited by Barry Munslow, is primarily concerned with the obstacles encountered by avowedly socialist African régimes in their efforts to implement their programmes. Following the editor's introduction, there are explorations of such topics as "Marxism in Africa" (Robin Cohen), "Women and the Transition to Socialism in sub-Saharan Africa" (Bje Nlo Ong) and "Practice and Theory: Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde" (Rafael Davidison).

Arranging a catastrophe

Geoffrey A. Hosking

ROBERT CONQUEST

The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet collectivization
and the terror famine
412pp. Hutchinson. £16.95.
009 1637503

On a battlefield men die quickly, they fight back, they are sustained by fellowship and a sense of duty. Here I saw people dying in solitude by slow degrees, dying hideously, without the excuse of sacrifice for a cause. They had been trapped and left to starve, each in his home, by a political decision made in a far-off capital around conference and banquet tables. . . . The most terrifying sights were the little children with skeleton limbs dangling from balloon-like aunts. Starvation had wiped every trace of youth from their faces, turning them into tortured gargoyles; only in their eyes still lingered the reminder of childhood. Everywhere we found men and women lying prone, their faces and bellies bloated, their eyes utterly expressionless.

Thus an eyewitness – quoted in Robert Conquest's *The Harvest of Sorrow* – describing a Ukrainian village in 1933 being slowly and systematically starved by deliberate governmental decision, as part of a campaign of "dekulakization" and "collectivization of agriculture" that eventually claimed eleven million victims. For more than half a century, a pall has hung over this mass murder. Diligently concealed from the world at the time by the Soviet government, it has surfaced intermittently in fragmentary testimonies, only to be forgotten again. Almost unbelievably, Dr Conquest's book is the first full historical study of what must count as one of the greatest man-made horrors in a century particularly full of them.

E. H. Carr used to assert that the history of the Soviet Union after about 1930 probably could not be adequately written, because of the paucity of reliable sources. I had always assumed that this warning applied particularly to the collectivization and especially to the famine; it therefore comes as a shock to discover just how much material has accumulated over the years, most of it perfectly accessible in British libraries. Robert Conquest has spent a lifetime proving Carr wrong, notably in *The Great Terror* (1968), which has remained the standard work on Stalin's purges, and has been paid the supreme compliment of translation into Russian and circulation in *samizdat* inside the Soviet Union. His new book is also an object lesson in the assiduous compilation and perspicuous use of available but not easily retrieved sources.

Since, however, Conquest unfortunately does not discuss his use of sources, nor even list them fully, it is important to consider what they are. His task was in some ways even more difficult in the present study than in *The Great Terror*, for Khrushchev, when attacking Stalin in his famous "secret speech" of 1956, specifically refrained from criticizing the collectivization of agriculture, and thus disclosed nothing about it. All the same, it became possible in the early 1960s for Soviet historians to accuse Party and State officials of "excesses" (indeed, Stalin himself had done so in a celebrated *Pravda* article of March 1930) and to document some of them. This cautious revelation of reality ended in 1965 when S. P. Trapeznikov, head of the Central Committee Department of Culture and Science, condemned the "incorrect assessment of collectivization" and the "emphasis on certain episodes" prior to bringing out two volumes of his own as camouflage on the subject.

Perhaps surprisingly, Soviet novelists have risen to the challenge better than the historians. With the rise of a conscientiously realist school of rural fiction in the late 1960s, many writers became anxious to explore the roots of what they perceived as the demoralization of the village. And, since most of them had been born and brought up in the countryside, they were able to draw on a rich vein of oral tradition in portraying rural life as it had been in the 1920s and 30s. A few of them were even able to squeeze some of their work through the censor. These novelists' evident concern for authenticity makes their testimony unusually valuable, even though it is not the kind of source which historians usually confront.

There are other reservoirs of information too. A few Party activists who participated in the collectivization later became disillusioned and managed to emigrate, publishing their re-

collections abroad. Especially useful are the accounts of Viktor Kravchenko (*I Chose Freedom*, 1946, from which comes the excerpt at the beginning of this review) and Lev Kopelev (*The Education of a True Believer*, 1977). Both of them make clear the burning faith and total discipline which impelled these young activists to coerce the peasants, regardless of suffering and destruction, into what they believed would be a better world for them.

The richest source of information of all, however, is to be found in the collections of documents issued by Ukrainian émigré organizations in the late 1940s and 50s. The most important single collection is *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin*, published in Toronto in 1953 by the Ukrainian Association of Victims of Russian Communist Terror. Western scholars have been inclined to pass snootily by compilations with such lurid titles. But they are wrong: such records represent "popular history" in a way that ought to appeal to every reader of *Annales*. As S. O. Pidhainy, the editor of this particular collection explains, there was no government to issue a "white book" – "therefore, in their own defence, the people themselves had to write this book". The "people" on this occasion were workers, farmers and clerks, by then living in Canada, each of whom gave not only his testimony, but also part of the funding to make publication possible. Of course, the great majority of individual incidents reported in the hundreds of eyewitness accounts cannot be verified, but their general tenor is amply corroborated by other sources, and they add a richness of detail often not available elsewhere. It is from these diverse sources, complemented by occasional official documents and the accounts of Westerners living in the Soviet Union, that Robert Conquest weaves his compelling narrative.

The truth is that the Soviet régime used rural terror deliberately in order to solve two problems. The first was how to break the control which private peasants exercised over the grain crop, the second was how to destroy the strength and independent spirit of the Ukrainian nation. Since the Ukrainian farmers held much of the most fertile land, the solution to both problems could be combined.

In recent years it has been usual for Western scholars to treat Soviet decision-makers in the

late 1920s as if they were early examples of a phenomenon which became much commoner in the 1950s and after: leaders of an underdeveloped nation faced with fundamental issues of economic development. This approach has generated some genuine insights, but it rests on the erroneous premise that they were rational economists. In fact, as Conquest rightly insists, they were "a group which had accepted a millenarian doctrine, and their rationale for holding power was that they would translate this into practice to produce a new and superior society". Both their doctrine and their upbringing induced in them an intense repugnance towards peasant society and everything associated with it, like small-scale production and the market. Although they had compromised with the peasants in 1921 to save themselves from economic disaster, they remained unanimous in the conviction that peasants ought to be amalgamated in larger economic units and brought under the control of the State. The opportunity to do this arose in 1928-9 with what Conquest shows was a relatively minor shortfall in grain marketings, but what the Communists perceived as a major challenge to their authority. Being both unaccustomed and averse to the subtleties of the market, they intervened heavily-handedly to requisition grain. That solved the immediate problem, but led to the obvious result that the peasants ceased to grow what they expected to be seized from them by force.

The Party tried to repeat its success by singling out certain peasants, whom it dubbed "kulaks", for especially severe taxation, while herding the rest into collective farms where the grain could be more conveniently expropriated from them. Those kulaks who failed to meet their new quotas were "dekulakized", that is, expropriated and then, depending on the degree of their impudent opposition, either shot, imprisoned, deported, or, in the most favourable eventuality, resettled on non-collective land in the locality. In all cases they were treated as outcasts. Vasily Grossman in his novel *Forever Flowing* (1970) described the attitude of Party activists (the passage is quoted by Conquest): "They looked on the so-called 'kulaks' as cattle, swine, loathsome, repulsive: they had no souls; they stank; they all had venereal diseases; they were enemies of

the people." As a Jew, Grossman was sensitive to attitudes of this kind. Deportation or imprisonment was in fact the fate of the majority of the "kulaks". Some formed the first huge contingents in the labour camps, others were towed down Siberian rivers and dumped in the forests to build a new life of their own in "special settlements" under the aegis of the GPU. Probably a quarter to a third of them perished.

The fate of those who remained behind on the new collective farms was not necessarily preferable, especially those who lived in the Ukraine. The sheer upheaval caused by the expulsion of the ablest and most independent peasants, combined with the difficulties of improvising collective cultivation of the land, led to an appreciable decline in grain production and a catastrophic fall in all other forms of agricultural output. The State, however, continued to exact its toll for the cities and the army and for export, regardless of what was left for peasant consumption. Indeed, it was worse than that. In the Ukraine, grain procurement targets were deliberately set so high that the collective farms had no hope of meeting them while still feeding their own members. Special "troikas" (representatives of the Party, the Soviets and the GPU) were sent round to ransack the villages and confiscate any food discovered there. The result was the most serious famine in the history of Russia, with five million dying in the Ukraine, another million (often Ukrainians) in the North Caucasus, a million in Kazakhstan (where collectivization entailed an end to the nomadic pastoral way of life and was resisted with especial desperation), and a further million elsewhere in the Soviet Union.

I had been inclined to think that the particularly high mortality in the Ukraine was explained by the fact that it was the most successful grain-growing region, and therefore was subject to uniquely harsh exploitation by a régime whose paramount concern was bread. Conquest's research establishes beyond doubt, however, that the famine was deliberately inflicted there for ethnic reasons – it was done in order to undermine the Ukrainian nation, which had been enjoying a unique cultural and linguistic flowering during the 1920s. Stalin feared that, as the second largest nation in the Soviet Union, it could become a rival power centre which might prove difficult to control from Moscow. Khrushchev once remarked, apropos of the deportation of small nationalities from the North Caucasus, that Stalin would have deported "the Ukrainians too, but there were too many of them". Mass starvation was, from his point of view, the next best thing. At any rate, the purge among Ukrainian intellectuals and "bourgeois nationalists" in the Party was carried out much earlier than elsewhere, and more or less coincided with the famine. Furthermore, GPU guards searched the trains on the border of the Ukraine to prevent food being imported or refugees leaving to seek food elsewhere. There are reports of Russian villages receiving supplies while neighbouring Ukrainian villages across the border were left to starve. All of this indicates that Stalin was pursuing ethnic as well as economic goals.

Ironically, Stalin largely failed in both the aims of his horrific policy. Although he won just about enough bread to feed the cities, he bequeathed a permanently under-productive and demoralized rural sector, which is still a significant brake on Soviet economic development today. And Ukrainian nationalism revived during and after the Second World War to become a constant thorn in the side of the Soviet leaders. Ruthlessness did not pay off, even in its own terms.

We are all in Conquest's debt for making coherent what had previously been known in an uncertain and fragmentary way. His book does not only exhumate dead knowledge: it is guided by a moral imperative. A nation which cannot face its own past will have difficulties in coping with its future. Mr Gorbachev's demand for *glasnost* (openness), praiseworthy though it is, has not yet faced this issue. Robert Conquest describes the present régime's attitude to the events expounded in this book as "the silence of complicity". There are many in the Soviet Union who are qualified to break that silence and who would willingly do so. Let us hope *glasnost* may now give them the chance.

A Greek Musée

When I look at my room I see powder. Life as a footnote to unwritten literature. The chair with its thick varnish picked up at a junk-shop, heading for a junk-shop, is preparing, even now, to vanish.

A few thousand books gathering dust and amber and half the books not read.
Literature is this torn old pair of slippers.
The plaster flakes and weals above my head

continually aspiring to the condition of literature, the facets of a crystal. I listen to a record knowing every voice on it is dead but breathes volumes into my chaotic word-board.

I inhabit a communal Musée
des Beaux Arts where all things learn through error, perfecting their falls from grace. I read the papers for anthologies of terror.

And look, a shepherd watches a child fall onto Greek soil, followed by the mother, followed by a man's leg, followed, it seems, by the sky.
Literature is Chicken Licken's fellow.

When I look at my room I see Greece. The bloody Gods are resting on my two seater settee, modelled on Habitat and falling to pieces now. All will be patched up in God's new city.

all will be literature, as perfect as the armour in the basement of the Fitzwilliam; the plates, the pots, the pictures and samplers, and the draughts of Auden, Spender, Tennyson and Yeats.

GEORGE SZIRTES

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Awakening from modernity

Terry Eagleton

JEAN-FRANÇOIS LYOTARD
Le Postmoderne expliqué aux enfants
165pp. Paris: Gallimard, 65fr.
271861001

JEAN-FRANÇOIS LYOTARD and JEAN-LOUP TIEBAUD
Just Gaming
Translated by Winifred Godzich
129pp. Manchester University Press. £21.50
(paperback, £5.95).
07190 14743

Jean-François Lyotard's jocular patronizing title will be welcomed by all those who have despaired of ever discovering exactly what post-modernism is. It might even be welcomed by some notable theorists of the post-modern, who seem as confused about the meaning of the term as the most befuddled lay-person. Is post-modernism a strictly American – even architectural – phenomenon, or is it of broader cultural and geographical scope? Did it begin in 1945, the 1960s, or has it always secretly been with us? Is it a variant of "high" modernism or a critical reaction to it? There are those who distinguish between a baroque, a rococo and a neo-classical post-modernism, and others who doubt that any of this ever happened. Post-modernism has been denounced as the degraded culture of late capitalism and celebrated as the spouse of populism and linked by some to the revolutionary avant-garde and by others to Las Vegas and the late-show.

There is, perhaps, a degree of consensus that the typical post-modernist artefact is playful, pluralist, self-ironizing and even schizoid; and that it reacts to the austere autonomy of high modernism by impudently embracing the language of commerce and the commodity. Its stance towards cultural tradition is one of irreverent pastiche, and its contrived depthlessness undermines all metaphysical solemnities, sometimes by a brutal aesthetics of squalor and shock. Is such a description, however, really intended to unite everyone from Andy Warhol to Philip Larkin, John Cage to Craig Raine? Is Samuel Beckett modernist or post-modernist? It would seem that we are all children now, and a simplified account of post-modernism, if the thing exists, is therefore timely.

Anyone expecting from Lyotard a handy bluffer's guide to this cultural minefield is in for a disappointment. For Lyotard means by *le postmoderne* less post-modernism than post-modernity, a far from nit-picking distinction. Post-modernity is more of a philosophical category than an aesthetic one: it means, in a word, everything that Auschwitz and Stalinism have taught us about the bankruptcy of the Enlightenment. Such narratives include the peculiarly modern tale of the steady conquest of ignorance by knowledge, the unruffled evolution of the Hegelian Idea, the Marxist saga of emancipation from oppression, and the capitalist myth of infinite technological development. Post-modernism signals the death of such "metanarratives", whose secretly terroristic function is to ground and legitimate the illusion of a "universal" human history. We are now in the process of awakening from the nightmare of modernity, with its manipulative reason and fetish of the totality, into the laid-back pluralism of the post-modern, that heterogeneous range of life-styles and language-games which has renounced the nostalgic urge to totalize and legitimate itself. Just as the post-modernist art-work abandons the conoling closure of a "metalinguage", ironically undercutting its own propositions, so science and philosophy must jettison their grandiose metaphysical claims and view themselves more modestly as just another set of narratives.

These theses, evoking as they do the later Frankfurt school, American neo-pragmatism and Parisian post-structuralism, have already been advanced by Lyotard in his *The Postmodern Condition* (1979), a work which, despite its immodest subtitle ("A Report on Knowledge") seeks to free us from the hypnotic power of the Whole. Totalizing historical theories must yield to a "pragmatics of narrative": we should forget Hegel and Marx and

model our knowledge instead on the self-legitimizing anecdotes of the Cashinahua Indians of the upper Amazon. One difficulty with this case is that there can be no real difference for Lyotard between truth, authority and rhetorical seductiveness: he who has the smoothest tongue or the raciest story has the power. It is hard to see that this is all that different in principle from technological society, where, as Lyotard disapprovingly notes, he who has the fattest research grant is most likely to be right.

Another problem Lyotard faces is how not to be an old-fashioned cultural relativist. For him, as for the American philosopher Richard Rorty, there can be no appeal to general criteria of truth and justice beyond our incommensurable language games: we should seek to understand the headhunters, not change them. Nor can there be any total social critique, since there is nothing total to be criticized. We are always caught up in one narrative or another, and can never cutlup ourselves to some metalinguistic vantage-point beyond them. Lyotard shares this belief with the later Wittgenstein and Hans-Georg Gadamer, as well as with Rorty; but whereas all three of these philosophers make no claims for political radicalism (Rorty is self-declaredly a "bourgeois liberal"), the former Communist Lyotard would still regard himself as in some sense anti-capitalist, and indeed has been celebrated by some of the rasher young Anglo-Saxon post-structuralists as the most revolutionary thing since the Long March.

What that radicalism comes down to in *The Postmodern Condition* is a euphoric scientific experimentalism of a vaguely Feuerabendian kind, involving a remarkably utopian view of modern science as a disruptive, open-ended, "paralogical" activity. "Science" can thus stand in the same critical relation to the tyranny of the totality as the negative work of art did for modernism proper. In neither case is there much hope of a political opposition to the system, as oppositional politics are part of the metanarrational problem rather than the post-modernist solution. The daringly Nietzschean Lyotard thus ends up, to quote one of his American commentators, "with a neo-liberal interest group pluralism plus the democratization of computers".

The problem of legitimization, however, refuses to go away. If it is enough that a narrative "certifies itself in the pragmatics of its own transmission without having recourse to argumentation and proof", as Lyotard suggests in

The Postmodern Condition, how is this not to let the Nazis' narratives off the hook? How is a discourse of political freedom and justice, issues which still dog Lyotard rather more than they do some other post-structuralists, not in some sense to implicate metalinguistic claims? In a further study, *Just Gaming* (a translation of *Au Juste*, 1979), Lyotard addresses this problem by maintaining an utterly rigid dichotomy, odd for one so enamoured of heterogeneity, between descriptive and prescriptive propositions. The classical political metanarratives all sought to ground their strategic imperatives in some form of scientific knowledge, lousing up their values with facts. Lyotard, in short, triumphantly reinvents David Hume, having apparently not read him (or any criticism of him), and deploys the fact/value dualism in the name of the crudest ethical decisionism. Since ethical and political injunctions cannot be anchored in a knowledge of society, they must be mysteriously self-derivative, absolutely self-guaranteeing. "We are in the position of Aristotle's prudent individual, who makes judgments about the just and unjust without the least criterion . . . It is decided, and that is all that can be said . . . I mean that in each instance I have a feeling, and that is all." Later in the book, Lyotard tries to shore up this fatuous intuitionism with the aid of Kant's third *Critique*, viewing political judgments as without concepts or criteria and so as akin to aesthetic ones; when this still seems inadequate as a way of running the country, he grabs for a bit of the Sophists or lapses into old-style consequentialism.

Post-modernism, then, does indeed bear a relationship to Auschwitz, though hardly of the kind Lyotard envisages. His *grand récit* of the Enlightenment is not so much wrong as drastically one-sided, a prejudice he shares with Foucault. Once dialectical thought has been ditched as "metaphysical", all narratives suffer a certain spurious homogenization: "modernity" for Lyotard would seem *nothing but* a tale of terroristic Reason, and Nazism little more than the lethal terminus of totalizing thought. This reckless travesty ignores the fact that the death camps were among other things the upshot of a barbarous irrationalism which, like some aspects of post-modernism itself, junked history, refused argumentation, aestheticized politics and staked all on the charisma of those who told the stories. It is Lyotard, not his rationalist opponents, who constructs the most "metaphysical" continuities between

a plurality of histories. In an empty formalistic move, he attends less to the moral and political content of any particular metanarrative (which might involve him in awkward metalinguistic claims about truth and justice) than to the mere fact of a "totalizing" theory. But he assumes without question that all and theories are of a disreputably metaphysical kind, and so leaves himself no alternative to them but a Beckettian tactic of making it up as one goes along. One is always either suffocating within some narrative or stifling for lack of air on some transcendental high ground; there is simply nowhere else to stand.

Le Postmoderne expliqué aux enfants consists of a set of brief essays or letters to various friends which add little to Lyotard's previous case, beyond acknowledging that in his preoccupation with narrative he has overlooked other discursive genres. It is the gospel of a philosopher who began as an activist in the French Communist Party, was associated in the 1950s with the *Socialisme ou barbarie* group, and who since then has suffered the customary post-1960s political disillusionment. In his work before *The Postmodern Condition*, Lyotard turned from Marx to Freud, finding temporary relief from bourgeois oppression in a somewhat hippie-like cult of libidinal "intersubjectivity". Now there seems little left but avant-garde art, democratized data-banks and the Cashinahua Indians. There is no comment in his recent work on the women's movement, which complicates his own view of Enlightenment by its simultaneous belief in emancipation and hostility to dominative rationality. Jürgen Habermas, who has tried somewhat similarly to redeem the emancipatory content of Enlightenment thought while jettisoning much of its metaphysical baggage, has been dismissed by Lyotard as a "dinosaur" (and has dismissed him in turn, along with Derrida and Foucault, as "neo-conservative"). It is ironic that the period of jaded Parisian post-Marxism has coincided with a whole set of notable advances by the liberation movements of the Third World, from the American defeat in Vietnam to the present struggles in South Africa, The Nicaraguans and the African National Congress, it would appear, have not yet been told about the epistemological illusions of metanarrative. In the end, Lyotard's work offers its reader a choice between the politics of the ageing hippie and those of the arch-Hegelian. It would seem doubtful that these are the only options available.

One way of establishing kinship between the various strains of antinomians is through the nature of their humour. When Hitler promised to rid the world of its "mongrels" it was clearly no joke, but when Wilde reported that Thomas Wainwright murdered a woman because she had thick ankles he was presumably intending to raise a thin smile. Stoddard Martin might have organized his subject better had he proposed a distinction between self-appointed and self-important prophets who merely pretend to treat their vision as a joke, and genuine jokers who encourage their audiences to believe that their messages contain more meaning than has in fact been put into them. Examples of the first kind would be Artaud, Crowley and George Harrison. Examples of the second kind, the social jokers whose activities are mainly subversive, would be Jarry, most surrealists, John Lennon. But the most interesting category would be third: those who have kept their audiences guessing, who shift continually between fantastic thoughts and threatened meanings. For Sade, Nietzsche, Wilde and Genet, ambiguity was no crime.

True connoisseurs of antinomian style will have appreciated Genet's reply when Nigel Williams asked him, in the course of his astonishing television interview, what he had felt when the Germans occupied his country: "Ravi." Heard as a comment on the sheer silliness of bourgeois France this was a joke. Heard as enthusiasm for the Nazis it was an outrage. As usual with Genet the burden of interpretation fell to his audience. Yet after Genet's death Williams conferred with Sartre in his description of him as a "family" man; and so perhaps he was – though obviously in a rather different sense from the American "Holy Barbarians" of the 1950s. Nevertheless, Karlovic and the bears were the certain fore-runners of the messianic Manson who, in the summer after the summer of love, butchered Sharon Tate and her beautiful but not very innocent friends. And Manson's "family" were, of course, Californian neighbours of Keith Kestey's and Philip Frankel's.

Contemporary Literary Criticism: Modernism through post-structuralism, edited by Robert Con Davis (511pp. Longman: £19.95. 0 582 28569 0) is an anthology divided into eight parts ("Modernism: The call for form", "The Plurality of the Text", "The Structuralist Controversy" etc.). It includes essays ranging from F. S. Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent" to Jacques Derrida's "Structure of Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences". The book contains further reading lists and an index.

Paint and perception

Martin Kemp

PHILIP CONISBEE
Chardin
238pp. Oxford: Phaidon. £37.50.
07148 23104

Since the eighteenth century, it has been customary to regard Chardin as a major "little master" rather than a really "great" artist who makes the most strenuous and wide-ranging demands on the spectator's visual, intellectual and emotional capacities. Although the traditional valuing of the epic sentiment over the domestic is open to challenge, supporters of Chardin are still faced with the problem that he is an artist around whom it is remarkably difficult to erect the kind of intellectual-cum-critical armature which a great artist is implicitly expected to sustain. Chardin has attracted some evocative critical responses, but he has proved continually resistant to more systematic analysis and it has been virtually impossible to define precisely the intellectual basis of his intentions within eighteenth-century culture. It is symptomatic of these problems that the only substantial modern monographs, by Georges Wildenstein and Pierre Rosenberg, have been founded on critical catalogues of considerable acumen and sensitivity, rather than setting Chardin's art within broader historical schemata. Philip Conisbee's elegant and lucid monograph now provides a convincing general review of Chardin's life and work, with special reference to the contemporary critical response and the institutional structures of the French art world.

Chardin's career passed through three main phases. He began by working with persistent technical and intellectual effort to forge a style in still-life painting which is classic in its synthesis of form, restrained yet sensuous in colour and deeply human in its associations. The human element became overt in the middle years in the unpretentious interiors peopled by the *petits bourgeois* and their households, with whom he felt at home. Finally, his resuscitation of still life as his central concern in his last years was accompanied by a few large pastel portraits which are extraordinarily compelling in both colour and characterization.

It is the great merit of Conisbee's book that Chardin as "the painter's painter" occupies the foreground. Beginning with a chapter on "The Great Magician", the author immediately stakes out the centre of his evaluation of Chardin as residing in "that lovely dialogue between paint as an individual substance and what it set out to represent". His own felicities of observation and expression ensure a harmonious blend with such distinguished witnesses as Diderot and Cochin. The result is an unassuming and attractive account which, however, corresponding to the artist's own notorious reticence, eschews any direct definition of the visual rationale for Chardin's magic.

Conisbee does hint at the potential importance of seeing *vis-à-vis* representing when he refers to "a perfect reconciliation between conception and perception" and a "shift from conception to execution", but he leaves the crucial terms "conception" and "perception" unexamined. Chardin's highly individual brand of naturalism, compared to its Dutch precedents, is resolutely non-descriptive. What is the visual basis for this suggestive naturalism? Does it lie in a new sense of what it is to "see" objects or in a new conviction about the nature of representation? Might Chardin's works really be about the construction of painterly equivalents for the thing seen – equivalents which are themselves perceptual subjects manifestly made out of paint?

Michael Baxandall has recently proposed that in looking at Chardin a series of optical-perceptual texts from the eighteenth century should be brought into play, within the context of a generally Lockean view of substance, sensation and perception. The texts, by such authors as Robert Smith and Nicolas le Cat, emphasize that our complex and variable judgments of size and distance are dependent upon a set of elusive variables, of which linear perspective is only one. If we accept these texts as directly relevant to Chardin's intention – rather than merely implying a hypothetical period reading of his works by a Lockean

observer – his paintings are fundamentally about "looking".

One of Conisbee's texts suggests at least some grounds for such an approach. Chardin's friend and supporter, Cochin *fils*, envisages the painter as saying to himself,

Here is an object . . . which it is a question of depicting. To be concerned only with rendering it truly, it is necessary that I forget everything I have seen, even so far as the manner in which these things have been treated by others. I must place it at a distance that I can no longer see the details. I ought to occupy myself above all with imitating the general masses well and with the greatest truth – those shades of colour, the volume, the effects of light and shade.

This strong hint of a distinction between "knowing" and "seeing" provides at least some encouragement for a Lockean interpretation of the fabled "naivety" of Chardin's naturalism.

However, other texts by those close to Chardin, including Cochin himself, suggest that this avoidance of the drily descriptive qualities of intellectual "knowing" was founded upon the intuitions of *sentiment* rather than the rationalizations of Lockean theory. Indeed, if we begin to interpret the key terms which seem to bear a special loading in the eighteenth-century literature on Chardin – *sentiment* and *naïveté* in particular – we are drawn away from the scientific texts and into specifically artistic debates about appearance, truth, beauty and

expression. When we realize that Diderot took Poussin as the perfect exemplar of *naïveté*, we can be sure that it was used in a manner remote from its modern connotations. For Diderot, something achieves naïveté when it is "perfectly and purely what it ought to be". Naïveté may be achieved through *sentiment*, which leads perception towards an intuition of essential truth. The ultimate harmony of essential truth resides more in man's perception of things than overtly in the objects themselves and finds expression in the autonomous beauty of works of art.

This set of formulations, derived largely from Diderot's later views on Chardin rather than his simplistic early praise of the painter's mastery of illusion, need not have been held by Chardin in these articulated and orderly terms, but the basic ideas relating to harmonious imitation were widely available in French thinking about the arts during the eighteenth century. There is much more to be accomplished in understanding these questions, and Conisbee may be forgiven for not wishing to adopt too definite a stance, but the issues of conception, perception and representation do need to be tackled head on if we are to claim a rounded understanding of Chardin's art.

The author exhibits a comparable wariness in meeting the recent challenges laid down by Norman Bryson and Michael Fried in reading Chardin's meaning. The issue here does not so

much concern whether certain aspects of Chardin's subject-matter such as bubbles, houses of cards, children's games and so on possess emblematic connotations, – which they undoubtedly do – but the status and role of emblematics in the making and reading of the paintings. Fried is surely right to emphasize that the dignified absorption of Chardin's characters contrasts markedly with the "frivolity" of their transient pursuits. Conisbee is fully sensitive to the reticent emotional nuances of the paintings, but he does not quite manage to address the question of whether those of Chardin's figure paintings which "can be read as moralizing or admonitory" are really *about* moral themes in any important sense. If we adopt Fried's stance, the absorption becomes a kind of good in itself, a different grade of morality within the superficially moralizing subject. If we follow Bryson, the subject-matter is part of the "discursivity" of the signified, yielding in Chardin's art to the painterly trace which emphasizes the "figural" of the material signifier. While I do not much like either of these formulations, both historians do demonstrate that the relationship of form and content in the reading of Chardin's art – historically and currently – responds to sustained and direct analysis within a firm conceptual framework.

My own view is perhaps closer to Bryson's, though without in any sense endorsing his semiotic framework. I believe that the distinguishing value of Chardin's work resides in a profound (if largely intuitive) reconsideration of how a painting as a manifestly painted and harmonized construction can act as a visual analogue for seen things. His great discovery, it seems to me, was a precocious form of Fechner's law. Fechner, a hundred years after Chardin, pointed out that in our coherent reading of visual phenomena the *ratios* of lighter and darker tones provide the key, particularly within the middle range of our discrimination, rather than absolute values of brightness and darkness. Chardin's paintings use our immensely subtle powers of discrimination within this middle range to create effects of light, colour and texture which exist only as *ratios* within the medium of "painty" paint. By emphasizing that his paint is paint he can nudge it towards description – a highlight here, a dark glaze there – within constrained parameters which actually enhance its suggestive powers. It is in his immensely hard-won and infinitely nuanced pitching of such effects that Chardin's revolutionary greatness lies. He transformed painting into an act of human and humane visual production guided by the very highest level of *sentiment*. The themes of his paintings deeply complement this vision of artistic sensibility, but the discursive content remains at most a conveniently shaped vessel for the kind of visual nourishment he supremely provides. We may be justifiably grateful that Philip Conisbee has provided such an accomplished guide to Chardin's subtle menu of visual delights.



A detail from Chardin's "The Governess", reproduced from the book reviewed here.

Dutch treats

Margarita Russell

ROMAN POTTERTON
Dutch Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century
Paintings In The National Gallery of Ireland: A
complete catalogue
229pp. £35.
090316230X

The National Gallery of Ireland owns nearly 200 Dutch Paintings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and this volume meets a long-felt need for an up-to-date critical catalogue. None of the gallery's previous catalogues had been adequately documented or researched, so Roman Potterton's task was formidable: previous attributions were erratic and no less than seventy-seven of them had to be changed. A special index provides a helpful brief reference to the changes.

In approaching the necessary and sometimes painful task of changing attributions the author has taken full account of recent scholarship, but without blindly accepting the verdict of leading experts. Thus the important "David's

Dying Charge to Solomon" (Cat 47) firmly remains a Ferdinand Bol, in spite of A. Blankert's attribution, in 1982, of the painting to Horst. Potterton also maintains the authenticity of the artist's signature, which had been rejected by Blankert and others as a forgery. The photographs of artists' signatures provided in an appendix are helpful in this, as in other cases.

The catalogue offers with each entry exhaustive data on provenance and literature. An index of previous owners and a carefully selected bibliography supplement this information. Each entry includes brief technical notes, and a few selected radiographs illustrate *pentimenti*, overpaintings or other physical conditions.

While the historical and iconographic content of paintings is fully discussed, the author refrains from superfluous description, relying instead on the book's illustrators. It would, however, have helped if the photographs had accompanied the texts instead of being relegated to a separate section. Cross-references between entries and illustrations are also made quite difficult because the illustration numbers

do not correspond to the catalogue numbers. Potterton apologizes in his preface for an absence of original research into the artists' biographies, but this is not really called for since a catalogue need supply only key biographical data for quick reference. These data should, however, be absolutely reliable. The great number of little-known artists in the collection necessitates a more laborious process than usual of verifying available information. Arnoldus van Anthonissen (born 1630), for instance, was not an uncle but the grandson of the well-known marine painter Aert Anthonisz, called Antum. The confusion seems to have arisen from a mistranslation of Laurens Bol's German text (*Die holländische Marinemaler des 17. Jahrhunderts*), where Enkel means grandson, not uncle. However, this is a minute slip among a wealth of reliable and clearly presented information. Potterton records in his preface that he started work on the catalogue with no specialist knowledge of Dutch seventeenth and eighteenth-century painting. The finished product, which has been six years in the making, now proclaims him as a reliable authority in the field.

Write, memory

Dan Gunn

PASCAL QUIGNARD
Le Salon du Wurtemberg
368pp. Paris: Gallimard. 85fr.
2 07 0707105

For some years Pascal Quignard has been establishing his well-deserved reputation as one of France's most intelligent and versatile young writers – poet, translator, essayist, and, as this, his third work of prose fiction, confirms, novelist as well.

Quignard's art has characteristically been an exacting one, inhabiting a space between, on the one hand, his facility and loquacity as an author and the broad scope of his interests and passions, and on the other hand the diverse, often extreme, formal constraints he seems to find it appropriate to work within. But here, perhaps for the first time, Quignard has relaxed the constraints and given himself some freedom: *Le Salon du Wurtemberg* displays a superabundance of energy, anecdote and emotion, and a prose which constantly borders on excess.

Soul erosion

Nigella Lawson

CORA SANDEL
The Silken Thread: Stories and sketches
Translated by Elizabeth Rokkan
175pp. Peter Owen. £9.95.
0 726 06586

Condemned to "minor classic" status, Cora Sandel's best-known work, the *Alberta Trilogy*, has never been much read outside her native Norway. The central theme of the books is the eponymous heroine's path to self-realization and independence; a state achieved by few of the women in her collection of short stories, *The Silken Thread*.

"Only daughters with four children are not liberated", reflects the nameless woman in "Avalanche", as the weight of unspoken resentments gathers momentum and husband and wife hurl at each other the spite nourished silently over the years, tugging at the threads that held them and their marriage together "as if they were exposed nerve ends". It is too late for them to stop the avalanche of angry words, meant and not meant; "fear seeps into her, woman's ancient fear of man, the master, who holds her fate in his hand". But of course fear seeps into him, too. Both husband and wife have been worn down by bitter everyday misunderstandings "until their souls have become thin and threadbare"; the erosion of hope has brought with it an erosion of moral well-being which leaves them both stunned.

Cora Sandel was Colette's Norwegian translator, and there is something of the French writer in Sandel's depiction of the contract between the sexes in "The Bracelet". She is "that abnormal and handicapped creature, a woman without a man"; he is older, a man who has discarded his wife – "about time too after twenty years of marriage, from the biological point of view" – and who feels in need of the uncritical admiration of a younger woman. They are at dinner, plunder for each other, silently congratulating themselves, "wallowing in unacknowledged deceit and intimacy. Sandel rests on the lushness of the scene – "his hand entered the ring of light and joined company with the still life of fruit, flowers and golden reflections in the wine, grouped round an ice-bucket" – and breaks it up abruptly when his deception (hers is left intact) is found out: "Even the table lamp is giving out a cheap artificial light. Nothing is what it seems."

Like Colette, Sandel is at home both in those warmly lit, expensive interiors (as she is with their inhabitants) and in the harsher, wilder landscapes of the countryside. The most moving story in the book is "Simple Memories", set in Brøder during the First World War. Life has always been hard; now it is harder. In the evenings a young boy reads aloud from the newspaper; Marie-Christine, the literate member of the community, deciphers the halting, important, newsless notes that arrive from the

The form is simple and elastic: Charles Chenogne, a musician of some fame, and a translator in his early forties, has retreated to his family home in Wurtemberg, and is writing down his memories of the previous twenty years in order to stave off solitude. He wishes to try for once to do more than interpret someone else's work – to interpret his own life. He wishes also to give substance to those who have mattered to him, principally to his one true friend, Florent Seinecé, whom he met twenty years before while in the army, and who has recently died in a car crash.

The novel begins with memories of days spent happily with Florent and his wife Isabelle in a rented house in Saint-Germain-en-Laye: enchanted days, indeed, before Isabelle abandoned her husband to take up with Charles, who, unable to resist the temptation, betrayed his friend and as a result had to spend long years without seeing him. As he writes, Charles manages to explain his attraction to Isabelle; but he never manages to explain why his attachment to Florent was and remains so strong. Yet the reader does not feel inclined to complain at this lapse; for the account of the joys and torment of this attachment is the novel's major achievement. There has rarely

been a finer or more poignant account of a friendship between men.

Charles is an insomniac and hence has an extra five hours a day of waking life. This surplus is matched by a memory so elephantine that it at times takes him close to the delirium of recollection of Borges's "Funes the Memorious". His memories are of the horrors of childhood, and of the brief enchantment of youth; of a musician's life of harsh discipline, and of moments of sensual abandon; of fleeting love and abiding friendship; of the need to move forwards, and of the increasing need to move backwards – as childhood becomes ever more important in the adult life. Every colour of every wall, the flavour of every sweet (the description of which takes the patience when it lasts for over half a page), and the sounds accompanying every event – all are remembered and recorded.

But Charles is brought back from the brink of a Funes-like madness, and the novel saved from its own tendency to excess, by the critical reflections with which the recollections are interspersed. Charles's need to remember is held in check by his awareness of the partial and falsifying nature of memory. What is known about memory and what is actually remembered thus cohabit somewhat awkwardly; nor is this the only awkwardness. Charles is torn between France and Germany, and between the two languages spoken by his mother and father respectively. His retreat to Wurtemberg is an attempt to find his father again; and every word written in French is a search for the mother who neglected him. The novel builds up as a way not of reconciling but of moving between the various – often rival – faculties, places, languages and people that have been crucial to Charles. It ends:

Je note et je rêve. Je note, je note et je me dis avec acharnement qu'il faut à ce souffle un corps, à ce regard des larmes, à ces lèvres une espèce de plainte. Je note et tout à coup je me dis qu'il faut à ce rêve aussi, peut-être, une sorte de dormeur.

Sleep and silence come, then, to the insomniac Charles, along with the relief of having perhaps dreamed the dream that mattered, voiced the words that count. *Le Salon du Wurtemberg* offers a comparable voluptuousness to the reader.

Fanatical innocence

Anna Vaux

AMALIESKRAM
Betrayed
Translated by Aileen Hennes
131pp. Pandora. £9.95.
0 86358 1145

Amalie Skram does not write about straightforward or comfortable things: desire is booby-trapped and morality double-edged in this short novel of misadventure, in which the betrayal of the title is shaped less by sexual differences than by the duplicities of society. What she does do, however, is write very simply – with a wide-eyed ease and apparent lack of tact – that borders on naivety. Published in 1892 (and here translated from the Norwegian for the first time), *Betrayed* shocked Skram's contemporaries, who found the flat brutality of her writing too stark. But in fact it is the absence of adventure that lends her prose its daring, and although there is nothing tricky in the episodic plot – which follows seventeen-year-old Ory and her sea-captain husband, Riber, on an ill-fated honeymoon – there is plenty that adheres to the plain-faced surface of the narrative.

Skram strips away or flattens out anything that might lend detail or depth. Indeed, the marriage bed is the only furniture she allows among the bare boarding rooms and vacant seascapes. As Ory passes from nursery to pupils with only the reminder that "It is the Lord who has said 'The yawn shall be one flesh'", the book brings sex to the surface of a region unfashioned by psychology, but mapped out firmly by feminist polemic.

To begin with, Ory cannot bear Riber's touch. Apart from the opening scene, she moves into a new sort of invisibility, hiding up against a carriage door, in piles of bedclothes, or in a hat and dressing gown in the middle of the street, to avoid a confrontation with the

man whose physical presence is now almost comically magnified (Skram describes him puffing his cheeks, blowing out his belly and squaring his shoulders with a cartoon-like bluntness). As the novel progresses, Ory's naivety takes a less palpable form. She cannot grasp innuendo, or understand the winks and gestures of the landladies who check her sheets. Surrounded by a crowd of knowing cousins, neighbours and passers-by, she seeks refuge in the bedroom from the only thing the bedroom is for.

There is a counter-plot, however. Ory's misgivings and refusals (construed variously as femininity and madness) begin to deny the childlike her innocence initially conferred on her. It is not simply that Riber wonders – as he does – what sort of woman he has married, but that Ory welds her purity with a Biblical wrath which turns her from angel to monster with frightening alacrity. Skram's prose exhibits a similar dangerousness. By the end of the book there is little left of the childlike guile with which it began. Naturalism falls away and the mythic intervenes, placing Ory in the role of judge and goddess and killing Riber in a cathartic sacrifice.

Betrayed is an ambiguous book – not least because of its malignant style. The division of sympathies (Riber's is, after all, a pitiable state) makes random detail equivocal and mixes sacrifice and betrayal in uncertain proportions. Quite who is the victim and who the victimizer remains open to question. But the story is stirring and direct in its portrayal of alienation and exclusion. There is throughout a mischievous insistence to scenes which never stray far from the home – as in Ory's terrified proximity to the sleeping Riber, whose snore blows his bedsheet backwards and forwards over his casual remarks about the weather as he prepares weights for the round his neck, and jumps almost unperceived out of the cabin window.

Extravagantly wandering the world

Robin Buss

PAUL MORAND
Les Extravagants: Scènes de la vie de bohème cosmopolite
230pp. Paris: Gallimard. 83 fr.
2 07 0703096

This is Paul Morand's first novel, written when he was twenty-two and only rediscovered in manuscript in 1977, the year after his death. It has been edited with notes and an introduction by Vincent Giroud, who describes it as "le Morand d'avant Morand", lacking Morand's later brevity of style and with other characteristic features of a first novel, but introducing the cosmopolitan theme so closely associated with his later work that it became attached to him as a label. For British readers, *Les Extravagants* has the additional interest of being set largely in England in the period when it was written, that is to say shortly before the First World War.

Despite some eccentricities (San Pancras, for the railway station), it shows that Morand's visits to this country had given him an acquaintance with English society and literature, book of which he is keen to exhibit. His hero, Simon de Biéville, mixes in the sort of society to which his own particulate name naturally inclines him, though he lacks some familiarity with its usages: Sir Leslie Baker-West is referred to as "Sir Baker-West", and, though willingly seduced by the Anglo-Indian Mrs Hyde, Simon falls in love with Princess Lemska, a complete outsider like himself. As well as knowing about country houses, Cowes, Oxford and the better parts of London, Morand has read widely in English and other European literatures, and is apt to cite Havelock the Dane or the latest slang, if not indiscriminately, at least in rapid succession.

A degree of snobishness was, in fact, implicit in Morand's notion of the cosmopolitan and led to his, in retrospect, rather unpleasant satire on the French cinema industry, *France la douce*, published in 1934 at a time when cosmopolite was a term of abuse applied by the Right to Jewish and other "non-national" influences. The Morand version of cosmopolitanism, far from suggesting anything that might override national peculiarities, means an intense appreciation of them. The extravagants of the novel, who may be opportunists, like Simon, looking for a soul-mate, or in-bred, like his friend Anquetil, wander across the surface of the world observing the characteristic features that distinguish its different populations (unless recalled for a stint of twenty-eight days' national service). Simon, to whom the title of extravagant is the noblest in the world, "voulait prononcer par toute la terre le mirador intelligent de ses yeux et s'enrichir des formes et des couleurs diverses que revêtent les êtres et les choses".

This bohemian existence is the privilege of a leisured élite, and not necessarily a wealthy one. In a passage that foreshadows the satire of *France la douce*, he allows Simon to observe the gathering of Le Tout-Venise, a mixture of artists, aristocrats, ministers and industrialists: Sir Sydney Thompson, *roi de la marmelade*; "les Taudis, du chocolat Taudis, Rolet des pâtes alimentaires avec Liane de Raney, l'écuyère dont le père, comme jadis celui de Théodora, ramasse le crottin au Nouveau Cirque", etc.

By the mid-1930s Morand himself could see that cosmopolitanism was out of fashion and, between the devil of nationalism and the deep sea of internationalism, advocated the first. The world of his youthful novel has a nostalgic charm, though the writing, less mannered than it later became, is surprisingly fresh. It may, as Giroud suggests in his introduction, have been on the advice of his father, or of Giraudoux, that he chose not to publish it, though he kept the manuscript and reworked it over a considerable period, as well as drawing out occasionally in later writings. It resurfaced in a Los Angeles bookshop, a testimony to the sensibility of its period and a writer who was very much of his time.

Raising readers

Heather O'Donoghue

DOROTHY BUTLER
Five to Eight
210pp. Bodley Head. Paperback, £4.95.
0 370 306724

Five to Eight is a guide to books suitable for children in that age group, children who are in the process of becoming readers. After an introductory chapter, "Raising Readers", which is a personal manifesto on the value of literature, Dorothy Butler devotes each chapter to a single year in her chosen age group. These four central chapters contain a sort of sketch of what to expect of the personalities, interests and emotions of children of that age; brief reviews of books which Butler has found children she knows have enjoyed; and finally a booklist, with short notices of further books. The concluding chapter, "Learning to Read", briefly outlines current theory on the process of learning to read, and explains why phonics (teaching children to spell out words for themselves) is not now in vogue.

The strength of the book lies in Butler's straightforward reliance on personal experience: if her grandchildren, for example, have enjoyed a book, she says so, and then describes the book's contents. Her critical terminology is simple and down-to-earth: good books are "gripping", "fresh and full of charm", "warm", or "read". Since she, by and large, mentions only books she would recommend, the superlatives begin to jostle one another; Roald Dahl's *Fantastic Mr Fox* is airily described, as "probably one of the most exciting books ever written". It is a book which seven-year-olds enjoy; in general her judgment is sound. *Five to Eight* is not, of course, a comprehensive survey, but it is wide-ranging and comes up with some unfamiliar names for parents looking for inspiration, as well as providing a good basic guide. Especially good is her selection of "classics" which fluent eight-year-old readers might try, although in every section more stress on the distinction between books for solo reading and books for parental reading aloud would have been useful.

Butler has not selected according to any preconceived plan or programme. She does, however, reveal a strong personal preference

for fairy tales, which figure largely in her recommendations, and indeed the only book she warns against is Dahl's *Revolving Rhymes*, which she begs parents not to give to children under the age of ten – precisely because it parodies fairy tales. In fact, her attitude towards Dahl's work is a good test of her fundamental belief that children will like good books best: she does acknowledge that his books are popular, though one can sense not only a certain regretfulness but also a little stiffness, as when she comments on their "inevitable vulgarity". But of course, she has a much stronger weapon than disapproval: *George's Marvellous Medicine*, with its extremely unpleasant, and unpleasantly described, grandmother, is simply not mentioned.

The weakness of *Five to Eight* is in its descriptions of the different age groups, which are subjective, sentimental and andy. Five-year-olds are "enjoyable people"; seven-year-olds "seem, on the whole, less spontaneously happy than six-year-olds". There is also a good deal of easy-going advice on how to manage children: don't worry about mess, no point buying valuable furniture, people are more important than things, and so on. It is hard to imagine a suitable audience for this mild opinionation.

Dorothy Butler is unselfconsciously clear and vehement about the value and point of literature. But, although at the beginning of *Five to Eight* she speaks of "that special nourishment of mind and spirit which comes from books", and more concretely, of how books can "help children towards an understanding of other lifestyles and values", she dismisses the problems of racism and sexism in children's literature, arguing that such evils are to be found in "bad" books like Biggles and Enid Blyton, and not in "good" books, and (contradicting her opening manifesto) that children's attitudes are formed not by the books they read, but by their parents. There is a strain of complacency running through the whole book, but finally this is outweighed by the usefulness of Butler's booklists, and by her unaffected, infectious enthusiasm for and commitment to nurturing a child's love of books. Shirley Hughes's line drawings complement the text perfectly; they show the most fetching children contentedly absorbed in reading.

Reaching for the sky

O. M. Ashford

PATRICK MOORE
Astronomy for the Under-Tens
48pp. George Philip, 27a Floral Street, London WC2. £4.95.
0 540 011037

What is a star? Why is the Sun so hot? Why does the Moon seem to change its shape? Why is the sky blue? These are some of the questions which Patrick Moore attempts to answer for the inquisitive young reader in this attractive book. This is clearly an ambitious task, especially as the intention (according to the publishers) was to cover the "whole of astronomy".

At first sight it seems that the author has succeeded remarkably well: the language is straightforward, the sentences are short and there are numerous coloured drawings and photographs. He is to be commended too for having followed the "many helpful suggestions" of the seven-year-old to whom he had submitted the manuscript. Regrettably, this initial promise is not sustained. The book has many shortcomings, both in the text and the illustrations.

The main problem with the text is that some of the explanations are hardly likely to satisfy an intelligent youngster. To say, for example, that the sky is blue because the "air spreads the Sun's light around" is inadequate; why, in that case, is the sky not yellow or red? Similarly it is not very helpful in a book at this level to state that sunspots are "due to magnetic effects". Again, if the Moon takes less than four weeks to go round the Earth why is there an interval of 29½ days between successive new moons? And what precisely is meant by the statement "the Earth may not be a proper planet?"

The illustrations are, on the whole, excellent. In two of the diagrams, however, the omission of lettering mentioned in the text makes them difficult to understand. In another, there is a discrepancy with the text, and in addition the star Arcturus appears to be in the Plough. The small photograph of the Moon is virtually useless: why is there not a really clear-cut picture (such as that on the back cover) on which some of the prominent features of the lunar landscape are named? Several of the main constellations are only

Learning to look

Alan Hollinghurst

LAURENCE CRASNY BROWN and MARC BROWN
Visiting an Exhibition
32pp. Collins. £5.95 (paperback, £2.95).
0 00 1848569
ROBERT CUMMING
Just Look . . .: A book about paintings
0 670 812889
Just Imagine: Ideas in painting
0 7236 5823 0
61pp each. Viking Kestrel. £6.95 each.
KENNETH KOCH and KATE FARRELL (Editors)
Talking to the Sun: An illustrated anthology of poems for young people
112pp. Metropolitan Museum of Art/Viking Kestrel. £8.95.
0 670 814504

Art is both easier and more difficult than ever: limitlessly available by reproduction, it comes more and more within everybody's reach; yet at the same time, as educational preoccupations shift, its language and concerns recede, year by year, from the grasp of more and more people. The study of history is unpopular, and with little knowledge of the Bible and less Greek modern children are increasingly unprepared for appreciation of the vast corpus of classic Western art. This might be thought to heighten the urgency as well as the mystery of art; but most new initiatives in galleries – the "trails" to spot kitchen implements, say, or dogs – seem more like attempts to break down children's overwhelming boredom in the museum atmosphere than serious steps towards looking at pictures.

Laurence and Marc Brown's *Visiting an Exhibition* is so titillatingly anxious to keep the children amused that it gives far more prominence to the pranks and anti-art jokes of the visitors than to the artworks themselves. These are reproduced either in the comic-strip format of the rest of the book, or as photographs glaringly collaged on to the pastel drawings. Random pieces of information are spoken by a museum guide and by the parents of the children whose initiation this is. "The columns from left to right are Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian" is an unusually helpful example, but the drawings of the three capitals are so inaccurate that the benefit is illusory. The educational



"Deer in the Moonlight" by William Morris Hunt (1824-1879). From *Talking to the Sun* reviewed here. part of the book is relegated to an off-putting, uncoloured appendix.

Robert Cumming's two books, which were first published in 1979 and 1982, also suffer from their need to cover a lot of ground in a tiny space, but he has surely got his prerogatives right. *Just Look . . .* is true to its title in insisting that we tackle pictures head on, take time to learn to see, to distinguish what painters are up to. It leads its readers, through rapid discussions and juxtapositions of paintings, to ponder interesting questions about light and proportion, about how the artist manipulates seen reality or imagines a new reality of his own. It achieves simplicity without simplification, and knows what it's doing.

Just Imagine is more problematic. Its brief is, in effect, to stop that educational gap that leaves children culturally alienated from the art of the past, to posit what Rubens meant when he painted "The Judgment of Paris", or what Hugo van der Goes wished to imply by sprinkling violets in the foreground of the Portinari "Adoration". At the same time it investigates political symbolism, the emotional implications of colour and brushwork, strategies of fiction in pictures, the self-reflexiveness of Jackson Pollock . . . There is enough matter here for many books, and in the area of religious iconography in particular the effect is rushed and mysterious. The book's instructive contrasts – a cheery Léger mechanic and a featureless Grosz puppet painted in the same year suggesting differing attitudes to industry and the self – are often outweighed by the complexity of the subject. But Robert Cumming's idea is to get the imagination working in the realm of art, and that his two books will certainly do.

All four books under review refrain from value-judgments; all four are equally free of any sense of art history: Rothko covers with Raphael, Frank Stella with Ghibliando. There is no suggestion of one thing preceding another. The most promiscuous of all is *Talking to the Sun*, which like the others assembles an imaginary museum – though the museum in this case turns out to be the Metropolitan. It is not a didactic book, and simply juxtaposes poems and artworks with related themes. Its rather old-fashioned principle is pleasure – and its effect one of revelation. As its compilers emphasize, it is a book to grow up with, and it is full of dreamlike resonances and unresolved suspensions. A Dinka chant accompanies an ancient Persian kneeling bull, a Tennyson lyric a Pragonard. The poetry ranges from Dante to John Ashbery, the art includes stained glass, clocks, musical instruments as well as paintings, drawings, engravings, photographs and sculpture. Famous lines and images lie alongside the rare and curious. It has none of the earnest helpfulness of Robert Cumming's books, and is perhaps intended for the more sensitive and reflective child; none the less, it must be one of the most beautiful and evocative anthologies ever compiled.

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TLS Listings

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of new and forthcoming books received by the TLS

The TLS Listings provides full publication details of those books received each week by the TLS which seek to fall within the main interests of our readers. Children's books, foreign-language books and paperback reprints of recent works are not, however, included. Publishers are asked to ensure that they let us have all the necessary information, including price and publication date.

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Caplan, Pat, *Editor The Cultural Construction of Sexuality*. 304pp. £25 (hardcover). 0 422 60870 X (hc), 0 422 60880 7 (pb). 3/2/87.
Segalen, Martine, translated by J. C. Whitehouse and Sarah Matthews. *Historical Anthropology of the Family (Themes in the Social Sciences series)*. Cambridge UP. 320pp. £27.50/\$49.50 (hardcover), £9.95/\$14.95 (paperback). 0 521 52704 2 (hc), 0 521 27670 5 (pb). 3/2/87.

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Frazer, Kenneth. *People of Chaco: A canyon and its culture*. Norton, UK distr. Wiley/Markham, Ontario: Penguin. 224pp. £17.50/\$24. 0 393 02313 3. 11/2/87.
Stoneman, Richard. *Land of Lost Gods: The search for classical Greece*. Hutchinson. 346pp. £14.95. 0 09 167140 X. 10/2/87.

Architecture

Breese, David. *A Queen's Progress: An introduction to the buildings associated with Mary Queen of Scots (Historic Buildings series)*. HMSO. 80pp., illus. £3.50 (paperback). 0 11 493343 X. 2/87.

Chalkey, Graham, editor. *In Celebration of King's College Chapel*. Cambridge: Pevensey. 80pp., illus. £2.95 (paperback). 0 90715 43 8.

Kotler, Spiro, editor. *The Architect: Chapters in the history of the profession (1st pub. 1977)*. Oxford UP. 371pp. £8.95 (paperback). 0 19 504044 9 (hc), 0 19 502067 7 (pb). 2/2/87.

Le Corbusier (Charles Édouard Jeanneret), translated by Frederick Etchells. *The City of Tomorrow and Its Planning (1st pub. 1929)*. Architectural Press. 301pp., illus. £9.50 (paperback). 0 85139 124 9. 3/2/87.

Le Corbusier (Charles Édouard Jeanneret), translated by James I. Damsitt. *The Decorative Art of Today (Architectural Press. 211pp., illus. £12.50 (paperback). 0 85139 015 3. 3/2/87.*

Schuyler, David. *The New Urban Landscape: The redefinition of city form in 19th-century America*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP. 237pp. £23.20. 0 8018 3231 4. 2/2/87.

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Craven, Wayne. *Colonial American Portraiture: The economic, religious, social, cultural, philosophical, scientific, and aesthetic foundations*. Cambridge UP. 499pp., illus. £33.95/\$39.50. 0 521 32644 5. 12/2/87.

Haywood, Ian. *Faking It: Art and the politics of forgery*. Brighton: Harvester. 154pp. £12.95. 0 7108 1043 1. 12/2/87.

Mint, Joan, edited by Margit Rowell. *Selected Writings and Interviews (Documents of 20th Century Art series; 1st pub. in US 1986)*. Thames and Hudson. 326pp. £22.50. 0 500 60012 0. 9/2/87.

Neff, Terry A. *A Quiet Revolution: British sculpture since 1965*. Thames and Hudson. 186pp., illus. £17.95. 0 500 23460 9. 2/2/87.

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North, John S. *The Waterloo Directory of Irish Newspapers and Periodicals, 1800-1900, Phase II North Waterloo Academic Press. 830pp. \$300. 0 921 07900 0.*

Skeppington, A. W. *British Civil Engineering 1640-1840: A bibliography of contemporary printed reports, plans and books*. 202pp. £45. 0 7201 1746 1. 2/2/87.

Tabor, Stephen Sylvia. *Plath: An analytical bibliography*. Mansfield: Mansfield. 200pp. £40. 0 7201 1830 1. 2/2/87.

Wilde, Everett C. Jr. *Mercier's "L'An 2440": Its publishing history from the author's lifetime*. Harvard University Library, Ed. distr. Amsterdam: Adlon. 47pp., illus. £12.50.

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Clinch, Mandy Harrison Ford. *A biography*. New English Library. 214pp. £12.95. 0 450 39940 0. 2/2/87.

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Fane, Julian. *Memories of my mother*. Harmondsworth: George Allen & Unwin. 148pp. £12.50. 0 241 12120 5. 2/2/87.

Feinstel, Elaine. *A Captive Lion: The life of Marina Tsvetayeva*. Hutchinson. 289pp. £15.95. 0 09 165900 0. 10/2/87.
Gladin, James John. *Galsworthy's Life and Art: An alien's fortress*. Macmillan. 616pp. £35. 0 333 40812 8. 3/2/87.
Hall, Anthony Goyas. *Man among Kings*. Lanham, MD: Hamilton Press, UK distr. Eurospan. 242pp. £14.95. 0 8191 521 2. 3/87.

Huntingford, Eugenia. *The Unsuspected Account: An autobiography*. Severn House. 225pp. £9.95. 0 7278 2003 0.

Kennedy, K. H. *Mining Tser: The life and times of Leslie Urquhart*. Allen and Unwin. 363pp. £20. 0 86861 898 5. 12/3/87.

Kingsmill, Hugh, introduction by Michael Holroyd. *Frank Harris, revised edition*. Biographia, 49 The Market, Covent Garden, London WC2E 8RF. 176pp. £17.50. 1 85389 000 2. 3/2/87.

MacKworth, Cecily. *Ends of the World*. Manchester: Carcanet. 188pp. £9.95. 0 85635 638 7. 10/2/87.

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Rose, Norman Chaim. *Welzmann: A biography*. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 220pp. £20. 0 297 78865 5. 2/2/87.

Sosa, John F. *The Best-Natured Man: Sir Samuel Garth, physician and poet (Studies in the 18th Century, 9)*. New York: AMS, UK distr. Eurospan. 215pp. \$34.50. 0 404 61475 2. 12/85.

Spring, Jacqueline. *Cry Hard and Swim: The story of an incest survivor*. Virago. 179pp. £3.95 (paperback). 0 86068 813 5. 26/2/87.

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White, William S. *The Making of a Journalist*. Lexington, Kentucky UP, UK distr. Harper and Row. 246pp. £19.95. 0 8131 1603 1. 1/87.

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Ritchie, Barry, and Walter Goldsmith, illustrated by Matthew Ritchie. *The New Elite: Britain's top chief executives*. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 179pp. £10.95. 0 297 78990 2. 10/2/87.

Watwick, C. A. *How to Use Management Ratios, 2nd edition (A Gower Workbook)*. Aldershot: Gower. 421pp. £47.50. 0 566 02425 X. 10/2/87.

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Jenkins, Rhys. *Transnational Corporations and the Latin American Automobile Industry (Latin American Studies Series)*. Macmillan. 270pp. £29.50. 0 333 40442 4. 2/2/87.

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Anthony, Evelyn. *No Enemy but Time*. Hutchinson. 230pp. £9.95. 0 09 167170 7. 2/2/87.

Barlow, Stan B. *Movie*. Michael Joseph. 173pp. £9.95. 0 7181 2811 7. 9/2/87.

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Clarke, Arthur C. *A Fall of Moondust (Classic SF, 9; 1st pub. 1961)*. Gollancz. 224pp. £3.50 (paperback). 0 575 03978 7. 2/2/87.

Cornwall, Bernard. *Sharpe's Siege: Richard Sharpe and the winter campaign, 1814*. Collins. 379pp. £10.95. 0 00 221431 8. 10/2/87.

Dever, Anne. *Warm Bodies (1st pub. in Australia 1986)*. Penguin. 447pp. £14.95. 0 390 29711 1.

Angus and Robertson. 244pp. £7.95. 0 207 15270 3. 13/2/87.

Dorsey, Marjorie. *A Choice of Nightmares*. Michael Joseph. 266pp. £10.95. 0 7181 2796 6. 9/2/87.

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Rosenthal, Erik. *The Calculus of Murder (Gollancz Detection; 1st pub. in US 1986)*. Gollancz. 232pp. £9.95. 0 575 04013 0. 26/2/87.

Rubens, Bernice. *Our Father*. Harmondsworth: George Allen & Unwin. 212pp. £9.95. 0 241 11979 0. 9/2/87.

Shaw, Bob. *A Wreath of Stars (Classic SF, 10; 1st pub. 1976)*. Gollancz. 189pp. £2.95 (paperback). 0 575 03980 9. 26/2/87.

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Lane, Herman. *When the Mind Hears: A history of the deaf*. New York: Random House, UK distr. Souvenir Press. 337pp. £18.95. 0 394 30878 5. 26/2/87.

Lewis, Meriwether, and William Clark, edited by Gary E. Moulton. *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, vol. 2: August 30, 1805-August 94, 1804*. Lincoln: Nebraska UP, UK distr. AUPG. 612pp. £18. 0 8203 2869 4. 26/2/87.

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Macdonald, Nancy. *Notes by Mary McCarty*. Harmondsworth: George Allen & Unwin. 212pp. £9.95. 0 241 11979 0. 9/2/87.

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Taylor, Anne. *Visions of Harmony: A study in 19th-century millennialism*. Oxford: Clarendon. 285pp. £25. 0 19 217193 9. 5/2/87.

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